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"Domine, pati et contemni pro Te"

St. John of the Cross.

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

MYSTICAL DOCTOR

Nihil obstat E. J. MAHONEY, D.D.,
Censor deputatus.

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LIFE OF

Saint John of the Cross

MYSTICAL DOCTOR

BY

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME

MOUNT PLEASANT, LIVERPOOL

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

FATHER BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN, O.C.D.

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INTRODUCTION.

A Life of St. John of the Cross has been a desideratum for many years. About the middle of the last century the Oratorian Fathers under the venerable Father Faber projected such a publication in their collection of Lives of Modern Saints. I am not sure who was entrusted with the task of writing it, or how far the preparations had progressed when it was authoritatively decided that its publication would not be opportune, and, in fact, the whole series of Lives had to be discontinued. A long time afterwards the late David Lewis, M.A., the translator of the Works of St. John of the Cross, compiled a life based upon the available Spanish, Italian and French sources, which appeared in 1888, and was also prefixed to the second edition of the Works of the Saint. This Life has long been out of print, and it does not seem advisable to reprint it, because during the last thirty years a great amount of work has been done, but still remains incomplete, bearing both on biographical and theological matters. In the meantime the demands for a short biography have increased. The end of last year saw the second centenary of the canonisation of the Saint, and the celebrations connected with it placed his wonderful personality vividly before the eyes of the Catholic world. Even more important was the promulgation of the Decree of the Holy See, 24 August, 1926, beginning *Die vicesima septima*, whereby His Holiness Pope Pious XI declared St. John of the Cross a Doctor of the Universal church. He had always

been regarded as one of the great Doctors *in* the Church, but now he is recognised as one of the Doctors *of* the Church, principally in matters connected with Mystical theology, like *e.g.* St. Alphonsus Liguori with respect to Moral theology. In addition to these motives for the present publication there is a third one, namely the ever increasing study of the higher paths of spirituality which is carried on not only by Catholics but even by many non-Catholics throughout the English speaking world.

The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame who have already given us so many excellent short Lives of Saints decided four or five years ago to include that of St. John of the Cross among their collection, and they were fortunate enough to obtain from the Oratorian Fathers in London the loan of a large number of rare and precious books bearing on the subject. The preparations had already reached the point where the actual writing of the book could have begun when it pleased Divine Providence to remove the gifted compiler. Her mantle fell upon another not less talented Sister who, of course, had to begin again almost from the beginning.

In presenting her work to the public a few words must be said.

First about the audience to which she addresses herself. It is neither the student of theology, nor the general reader, but first and foremost the numerous young ladies who have received their education in the establishments of the Congregation, in which a solid, all-embracing religious training is of fundamental importance. These Lives of the Saints are calculated to form a kind

of post-scholastic course, re-asserting and enlarging by concrete examples the lessons learnt during the school days. They are, therefore, in many respects deeper than popular Lives would be ; at the same time they avoid technical matters for the mastering of which a regular theological training would be required.

Secondly, it is necessary to say that the Life of St. John of the Cross presents some peculiar difficulties. In the words of the Church he was given by God to St. Teresa as a collaborator. He it was who first carried out her wish of establishing her reform of the Carmelite Order among the friars. After the first few years he was entrusted with various offices of real importance, but not of the greatest prominence, and for the larger part of his life he worked in comparative obscurity. During the critical years 1574 to 1577 he occupied the post of confessor to a convent of nuns, and was hardly in a position, even should he have wished it, of taking a prominent share in the development which led to the bitter conflict between the Calced and the Discalced Carmelites. Nevertheless it was he, more than anyone else, who had to bear the full brunt of the storm which broke in the last named year. These matters cannot be disregarded in a biography ; it is indispensable to give at least a short outline of the course of events in which St. John was concerned, although not in the active but only in the passive sense ; but it has been considered unnecessary to enter into more details than are required for the understanding of a complicated situation.

Finally, the most abiding fruit of his life are his spiritual writings. To do full justice to these it

would have been necessary to write a treatise on Mystical theology and to take cognisance of recent discussison on several difficult problems connected with his works. But this would have been out of keeping with the purpose and the whole tenor of this little book, and therefore the author has preferred merely to pass in review of his several writings and give, in the Saint's own words, a summary of his teaching, leaving out all those questions which are discussed among theologians by profession. This plan seems eminently sober, and it is sincerely hoped that the book will prove useful and acceptable to those for whom it is intended, and will also appeal to wider circles.

BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN, O.C.D.

KENSINGTON, 1927.

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS.

MYSTICAL DOCTOR.

CHAPTER I.

A CHILD OF BENEDICTION.

JUAN DE YEPES was born at Hontiveros, or Fontiveros (Fons Tiberii), in Old Castile, nearly four hundred years ago. The year of his birth was 1542, the day was probably the 24th of June. The once famous city was then reduced to a mere village, whose chief claim to notice lay in the fact that it was situated on the route between Toledo and Medina del Campo, at that time one of the great trading marts for Europe and America. In Fontiveros there lived a young orphan girl, Catalina Alvarez, the adopted daughter of a respectable widow whose house offered accommodation to passing travellers. Among these, in the first half of the sixteenth century, came Gonzalo de Yepes, of noble birth, but poor. On his father's death he had been taken into the business house of his uncle, a rich merchant of Toledo; but in the designs of Providence, he was to exchange his worldly advantages for a life of poverty and hardship, in order that he might become the husband and father of saints.

He saw in Catalina Alvarez, not only the purest type of Spanish loveliness, but also the embodiment of all that was noblest and best in the peasants of Spain in the sixteenth century. Long years of struggle against

the Moorish invaders had given virility to their faith, and ardour to their zeal for religion. They lived in great measure the life of the early Christians after the pagan persecutions had ceased. They were poor, often ignorant of letters beyond the traditions and folk-lore of their villages; but they had glimpses of heavenly things which gave to their lives a certain austere beauty and distinction.

Gonzalo de Yepes then, at the risk of forfeiting all claim to his uncle's wealth, asked Catalina to become his wife. She consented; and the marriage took place without the knowledge of his uncle, who promptly disowned the pair and left them to secure a livelihood as best they could. They set themselves bravely to the task. Catalina taught her husband her own craft of weaving; and their little home was not without resemblance to the holy house of Nazareth. Poverty, silence, and hard toil, were its outward characteristics; peace, and prayerfulness, and mutual love, its inward treasures.

At twenty-five years of age, however, Catalina was left a widow with three young children to provide for. Her spirit of faith, her unbounded trust in God, and her tender devotion to Mary, rendered her equal to the task. Francisco, her eldest-born, grew up to be the model of a Christian workman and father of a family. He even reached, as will be shown in due course, a high degree of mental prayer and union with God. Luis, the second child, was taken to heaven in his babyhood. Juan, the youngest, became one of the greatest of the Spanish mystics—Saint John of the Cross.

It was from his mother, during the impressionable years of early childhood, that the future mystic learned the relationship which exists between purity of heart

and peace of soul, between poverty on earth and riches in heaven, between agony in the flesh and joy in the spirit. She taught him how to find in prayer strength to fight the battle of life. She pointed out the way of the Cross, and left him to follow it as God inspired him. So it came about that, in his boyhood, he would be discovered sleeping on the bare ground with a bundle of wood for his pillow; or interrupting his night's rest to pray or study. Deep into his child-heart sank the story of the Passion of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary; and his religious character shaped itself accordingly.

He cannot have been more than five years old when, playing with some companions at pulling out the reeds which grew along the edge of a pond, he fell into the water. Seeing him sink the other children shouted for help; but he quickly rose to the surface, where he remained seemingly quite unperturbed. A man passing by came to the rescue; he held out to the boy a long rod by means of which he drew him to land; then he went silently on his way. Juan said that, as he was sinking, a most lovely lady had come to him, holding out her hand to help him; but he (courteous little Spaniard that he was) had hesitated to touch with his dirty fingers that hand "tan hermosa y limpia," so beautiful and pure. Then the lady had held him up herself, until the man with the rod had him safe. Commentators on this circumstance have not failed to suggest that if, as Juan believed, the lady who appeared to him was the Blessed Virgin Mary, the man must have been St. Joseph. Be that as it may, the fact remains, that the child of benediction was miraculously preserved, and that then, as in later years, he behaved as one not unaccustomed to supernatural intervention in the difficulties and dangers of life.

It was probably some time after this that Catalina took her boys to Toledo, in the hope that one of their father's rich relatives would undertake to provide for their education. The journey was painful and almost beyond her strength and her means; but her mother-love and her trust in Providence enabled her to accomplish it. She went first to Torrijos, in the environs of the city, where resided one of her husband's brothers, an archdeacon and member of the Cathedral Chapter. He had no help of any sort to give her. Undaunted by this rebuff she went on to Galvez, some twenty miles from Toledo, where there was another brother—a doctor who, she had been told, was a kind man, and liberal in his dealings with the poor. He received her courteously, keeping with him her eldest boy whom he promised to provide for as a son. The good doctor's wife, however, was not of his opinion. She looked on Francisco rather as an interloper than a son, and she treated him accordingly, making the poor boy wretched and home-sick; so that when, the following year, Catalina came to see how her child was faring, she took him back with her to Fontiveros.

The little home was growing poorer and poorer. Still the brave mother struggled on. She sent the boys to the village school, until the elder showed so little aptitude for even the simple lessons given there, that she kept him at home to help with the weaving which was to be eventually his chief means of support. As to the little Juan, he gave promise of higher things; and in her heart of hearts his mother no doubt cherished a secret hope and conviction, that he would one day serve God as a priest or a religious. Already he was distinguished among his school-fellows by the quickness of his apprehension and the soundness of his judgment;

while his tender piety touched the hearts of all who saw him serving Mass each morning in the chapel of the Augustinian nuns. On the other hand, he seemed to possess no facility whatever for the practice of any art or craft; so that it may have been in the hope of finding some means of giving him the education demanded by his natural gifts, that Catalina determined to quit Fontiveros.

Could she have done so without a pang? It was there that she had known her greatest joy, her bitterest sorrow. She would leave behind her there, the birthplace of her children and her husband's grave. Biographers, as a rule, do not pause to make reflections such as these. They sometimes chronicle merely the incidents that can be attested, and seem to forget that these are but the outward circumstances of the real life within. Juan de Yepes was born and nurtured in extreme poverty, in order that he might grow up independent of creature comforts, and thus more surely seek and find the Creator. At his mother's knee he learned that the touchstone of love is suffering; and he came with her to Medina del Campo at nine years of age, ready for the great adventures of life awaiting him there.

The little family halted first at Arevalo. How long they remained there is uncertain. In any case, Medina was the goal of Catalina's heroic efforts to find employment for herself, and if possible, some higher education for Juan. Though fallen from its first estate, its feudal greatness, Medina del Campo was still a city of note. Its ferias, or fairs, rivalled those of Valladolid; its Rua, or High Street, stretched as far as the Castello de la Mota. It was thronged, in season and out of season, by the merchants of many countries—of France, Italy

and Spain, of England and the Netherlands—with their silks of many dyes, their gold and silver tissues and embroideries, their exquisite metal work and carving, their porcelains, and pictures, and books. What a revelation of the fascinations of this world for the wondering eyes of the boy, as he passed along the Rua, or turned aside to wander among the booths and cabins contrived for the accommodation of the buyers and sellers, the money changers, the interpreters! To a mind like that of Juan, it was almost as liberal an education as a tour in foreign lands.

His mother's trade, and her connection with the merchants of Toledo, would help her to make good her arrival at Medina, and to find means of placing Juan at school there. As she expected, his brilliant talents and remarkable piety attracted much attention, and caused him to be spoken of beyond the precincts of home or school. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he should have come under the notice of the director of one of the hospitals, a man who had abandoned all else, to devote himself to the care of the sick and suffering, Alonso de Alvarez of Toledo. Possibly he was acquainted with the forbears of Juan in that city and was moved to compassion by Catalina's misfortunes; possibly he saw in the boy the promise of a great future. Motives for action are often mixed beyond our knowledge. The director of the hospital, however, offered to take Juan under his protection; and it was agreed that the boy should be employed in the service of the sick, and have time allowed to him to follow the Grammar course in the recently founded Jesuit College.

CHAPTER II.

HOSPITAL ATTENDANT AND COLLEGE STUDENT.

Of the numerous hospitals in Medina at this time, that of the conception to which Juan was attached was one of the most important. It derived its name of "Las Bubas" from the tumours, often malignant and incurable, from which its patients suffered. For the boy of fourteen it furnished an experience of human misery and helplessness, in striking contrast with the ideas of life presented by the ferias, and the fortune-seekers that thronged the city. Moreover, it gave him an opportunity of witnessing the methods of accurate and prolonged observation practised by the doctors, and their skill in discerning physical and mental causes of disease. It enabled him to make a beginning of that study of the human soul—its lower instincts, its passions, its fancies, as distinguished from its acts of intelligence and free-will—which was to establish his mystical doctrine on so sound a philosophical basis.

The effect of his presence on the patients, and others connected with the hospital, could not fail to be singularly beneficial and agreeable. His refined and modest bearing, his sympathetic and intelligent helpfulness, his piety and regularity, all contributed to win for him universal esteem and affection. His patron, Alonso

de Alvarez, already saw in him the future chaplain of the hospital, possibly his own successor as its director. He was faithful to his promise that Juan should be allowed to attend the Jesuit College, where he was to come under the influence of a teacher whose personality could not fail to impress him.

Juan Bonifacio possessed in a remarkable degree the two essentials of a good teacher—a clear and full knowledge of whatever he had to teach, and a sympathetic insight into the minds of his pupils. The Latin language and literature was to him a well-spring of intellectual life; his method of teaching it was such as to infuse into the minds and hearts of his scholars, both the love of learning and the love of virtue. He was only nineteen years of age, and had been but four months a novice in the Society of Jesus, when he was appointed professor of Latin at Medina, about the close of the year 1557.

The college was then in all the glow and energy of its opening years. It had been founded in the year 1551, the very year in which Juan de Yepes had been brought to Medina. It had passed through the usual ordeals of opposition and persecution, which are the tests of all great work for God. Its professors had begun by visiting the hospitals and prisons of the city, and offering to its youth a free course of lectures on philosophy. In 1555, they had organised their Latin classes; and two years later, as we have seen, the novice, Juan Bonifacio had begun his unique career.

It might be sufficient to register these facts with, perhaps, the additional information that the master was efficient, the pupil diligent and successful. But there is something more to be said to those who are reading this little work with a view to gaining, not merely some

knowledge of the salient events in the life of Saint John of the Cross, but also a true appreciation of the depth and wisdom of God's loving Providence in his regard. There is a life-like picture to be painted of the two young Spaniards, both exhibiting in a notable degree the dominant features of their race, both endowed with brilliant natural gifts, both irresistibly drawn to devote their lives to God's greater glory.

Juan's keen intellect soon recognised in the young Jesuit, a man with this single aim, whose love for his appointed task amounted almost to a passion; and who found in the teaching of Latin, as it should be taught, his way to heaven. So entirely did Padre Bonifacio become convinced of this, that when, some ten years later, Saint Francis Borgia offered to have him replaced in order that he might study theology, his reply, subject to obedience, was; "Haec requies in aeternum mea: hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam." "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell for I have chosen it." As though he would say: "In this work I wish to live and die; because in it God gives me graces so great that I hope in it to obtain my salvation." This was the master to whom Juan de Yepes owed that mental discipline, which was to render his reasoning so right and well balanced, his language so clear and correct.

The pupil, on his side, responded without reserve or halt to the training he received. In the grammar classes which he was first licensed to attend, the lessons were of about an hour or an hour and a quarter, morning and afternoon. It must have been often difficult enough for him to arrange his work in the hospital, so as not to lose part at least of these lessons. Doubtless his intelligence and assiduity helped him to make good such loss; nevertheless, it remains a subject of wonder, that he should

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have managed so to combine his duties in hospital and college, as to satisfy the authorities in both places. There is no reason to suppose that he did not pursue his studies as far as the limits of the college curriculum permitted. It is probable that after grammar and rhetoric, he followed the course in arts, applying his mind with special interest to the study of philosophy.

His bent was towards research into the nature and properties of the human soul, and the relationship between its faculties and the bodily organs by means of which they are exercised. As he sought to penetrate these problems, he gradually grew to seek their solution in prayer, rather than in study alone, becoming, to quote Padre Wenceslas: "tenacious in hospital work; tenacious in listening to lectures, in reading, and in study; but most tenacious in his interior life." He had, so to speak, so firm a grip on the duty of the moment, that he allowed nothing to distract him from it, or to hinder him from performing it with the utmost care; and all the while his spirit was in close communion with the world unseen. He remained, as he had been in childhood, a devout client of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Every day he recited on his knees her Rosary and her Little Office; and whenever opportunity offered, he proclaimed her glory and defended her privileges.

So passed the years of his service in the hospital and his study in the college. The day came at last when he stood at the parting of the ways, with the chaplaincy and possible directorship on the one hand, and an uncertain future on the other. He had to make a momentous choice; but his was not the soul to be swayed by any but the highest considerations. He could never contemplate the priesthood as a means of support for himself and others. He felt in his inmost soul that God

had some special work for him to do. He paused, therefore, and prayed earnestly to know the will of God. Then he respectfully but firmly declined the offer of his patron.

He did not, as yet, see clearly what it was that God wanted him to be and do. He continued, for the time being, to serve the sick in the hospital, to study and to pray. He realised to the full the sacrifices his mother had made for him ; but he knew her too well, to imagine that she could wish him to choose any path through life, but that which should be clearly pointed out by the finger of God. Moreover she was not utterly dependent on him for support. So he prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and committed his cause to Our Lady.

CHAPTER III.

THE CARMELITE FRIAR.

JUAN was by this time one-and-twenty years of age. He had realised that "Wisdom is better than strength;" that she "is glorious and never fadeth away;" and that "the beginning of her is the most true desire of discipline." (Wisdom VI.) It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that he should long for a well-ordered life. He loved to be alone, to exercise his mind upon the highest objects of thought, and to yield himself up to the workings of the Spirit of Wisdom within him.

One day, while thus engaged, he heard in the depths of his soul the words: "Seras religioso en una religion antiqua, y levantaras su primera perfección." (Thou shalt become a religious in an ancient order, and shalt restore its first fervour). He could not doubt but that he had heard these words; yet he feared delusion, and he shrank from the grave responsibility they implied. He did his utmost to banish them from his mind; but the longing for a religious life began to take so deep a hold upon his heart, that at last he knew but one preoccupation—how to correspond with his evident vocation.

He felt no attraction towards any particular Order; and he was far from wishing to discover one that had fallen from its first fervour; so he again, and again,

sought the powerful intercession of Mary. As he was praying to her in the Carmelite church of Saint Anne, he felt strongly urged to seek admission into the adjoining monastery. He obeyed the inspiration, and as his reputation for scanctity as well as for learning was well known in Medina, the friars made no difficulty about accepting him. On February 14th, 1563, he received the habit with the name of Fray Juan de San Matias.

Here, in order to gain some idea of the condition of the Order at this period, let us take a glance at the origin and traditions of Carmel, and the modifications to which its primitive rule had been subjected. The Carmelites have always looked upon the Prophet Elias as their founder, the "Sons of the Prophets" as their first brethren, and Mount Carmel, the garden-land where Elias had his vision of the little cloud rising out of the sea to bring rains to the parched earth (a type of Máry Immaculate), as the birthplace of their order. Hermits of Carmel are said to have descended from their mountain to listen to the preaching of St. John the Baptist in the desert; and, later on, to have been among those converted by the first sermon of Saint Peter. Going back with the good tidings, they are said to have built, on the site of the vision of Elias, an oratory in honour of the Mother of God whom they had seen in Jerusalem. These glorious traditions tell us further that, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Saint Albert, Partriarch of Jerusalem, gave a rule to the "Hermits of Our Lady of Mount Carmel," whose numbers had been considerably augmented by vocations from the West, during the Crusades.

Opposition to the growth and spread of the Order was not wanting; but the Blessed Virgin took its cause into her own hands. By an apparition to Pope

Honorius III., of which the Roman Breviary makes mention on July 16th, she prevented its suppression, and secured that Pope's approbation of the Carmelite Rule, in 1226.

At this period the Order undertook the practice of preaching and giving spiritual aid outside their monasteries. Such had been the custom of the Hermits of Mount Carmel, from those early days when the Prophet Elias and his followers were to be found exhorting the Jews to be faithful to the true God. Thus the Carmelites in Europe became one of the Mendicant Orders; and the Rule of Saint Albert was modified to suit the changed conditions.

Once more the Blessed Virgin appeared as the Queen and Protectress of Carmel; this time to an Englishman who had been elected General, at the Chapter assembled at Aylesford in 1247, Saint Simon Stock. The saint was keeping his accustomed vigil, imploring a sign of benevolence from the Mother of God in the words of his own beautiful hymn, "Flos Carmeli":

"Flower of Carmel,
Blossoming vine,
Splendour of heaven,
Mother divine,
None like to thee!
Mother of meekness,
Peerless and fair,
Thy children of Carmel
Save from despair,
Star of the Sea!"

The Blessed Virgin appeared to the holy old man with the scapular of the Order in her hands. She told him that it should be the privilege desired, the proof of her special protection over all associated with her beloved children of Carmel. They needed all the

strength and consolation brought to them by this vision; for, in another forty years, after the fall of St. Jean d'Acre in 1291, the Saracens massacred the friars on the holy mount, and burned down their convent. They died singing the Salve Regina.

This barbarous massacre completed the destruction of the Carmelite monasteries in the East; but their number in Europe was already very remarkable; their foundations including, not only those abodes of prayer and penance far removed from the din of crowded cities but also the friaries in such university towns as Cambridge, Oxford, Paris, and Bologna. Hundreds of young Carmelite friars studied sacred lore under distinguished masters. With them faith and science, learning and holiness, went hand in hand. Among the lay-brothers there were sculptors and painters, and architects whose work gave evidence of the piety which inspired and accompanied it. The Order was then at its best; but it was also nearing those calamitous events which were to put to the proof its supernatural origin and endurance.

In the fourteenth century the "Black Death," that terrible plague, which sometimes struck down in a single city as many as five hundred persons a day, brought distress, and not infrequently destruction, to the Carmelite houses. Ecclesiastical authority was weakened by the great Schism of the West; monastic discipline became relaxed; and in spite of the efforts made by eminent Generals, and many saintly members of the Order, the primitive rule was considered by the majority of the friars as far too strict for observance. In 1431, therefore, at the petition of the general chapter of the Order, Pope Eugenius IV. lightened the burdens of penance and solitude which seemed to press too heavily upon the weaker brethren. The rule so

mitigated, however, was still sufficiently austere in comparison with that of other Orders. There were saints among those who professed it, both friars and nuns, whose first canonically erected convent was founded in Guelderland, Holland, 1453. The then Prior General was Blessed John Soreth, one of the great lights, not only of Carmel, but of the whole Church. Pope Calixtus III. had wished to make him a bishop; but the earnest appeal of the humble friar had prevailed, and he died at his post in 1471.

Another Carmelite saint was Blessed Baptist Spagnoli, Prior General at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He died at Mantua in 1517; and was proclaimed by his compatriots "ter massimo," thrice very great, as theologian, philosopher, and poet. Pius X., when bishop of Mantua, summed up his virtues in the words: "Baptist of Mantua was a prodigy in the order of grace."

The Venerable Nicholas Audet was another illustrious Prior General, elected in 1524. Chosen by Pope Clement VII. as his confessor, he received from the Holy See many favours for his Order, and was commissioned to visit all its provinces, with a view to the revival of its primitive fervour. He died at Rome, December 6th, 1562.

It was in the February of the year following that Juan de Yepes was clothed with the Carmelite habit at Medina del Campo. In 1564 he made his vows as a friar of the Mitigation, or as it was then called, of the Observance, in the hands of Father Angel de Salazar, Provincial of Castile. With such a record, and with members still counting saints among them, the Carmelite Order could hardly be considered by Brother John of St. Matthias as the one indicated by the prophetic words spoken to him. Nevertheless, under the inspiration of

the Holy Ghost, and with the sanction of his superiors, he began to practise the primitive rule in all its strictness. This was a heroic undertaking, for he had to keep, as it were, two rules; since he had to conform to the regulations of the monastery in which he lived. For example, he saw himself bound to perpetual abstinence from flesh, without finding any special provision made for him on those days when the friars of the Mitigation were allowed to eat meat. Still he lived as far as was possible the life of the first Carmelites. His silence and solitude were of the strictest. He worked hard and prayed incessantly; and treated his body with incredible severity, wearing an inner garment made after the fashion of fishermen's nets, out of coarse grass or sea rushes, the thick knots of which were as hard as stones. He also wore an iron chain studded with sharp points; and he lost no opportunity of subduing his flesh by mortification. Withal he was the very soul of loving kindness towards his brethren; while his meekness and docility towards superiors were never known to fail.

The University of Salamanca, founded three centuries earlier, was celebrated throughout Europe for its school of theology. There the Carmelites had a College for their students; and thither, in the year of his profession, Brother John of St. Matthias was sent. The archives of the University contain four entries of his name, under the dates: 1564-5, 1565-6, 1566-7, 1567-8; the last one describing him as priest and theologian. A manuscript records the fact that he was a brilliant student, elected prefect, and deputed to give his fellow students certain lectures. We can picture him traversing the courts of the University, grave and recollected; or we can see him taking part, with simple distinction and subdued

earnestness, in the public disputations, and then hastening back to the silence and solitude of his cell.

As at Medina, that cell was small and dark; all the light, and that was scanty, came from the roof; but there was a window opening into the Church through which he could see the Tabernacle. There he would kneel and gaze at the abode of the Prisoner of love, Who, above all others, was his Master in the sublime science of mystical theology. There he prepared for his ordination; and there he asked and received the grace of perfect purity of soul. When about to say his first Mass in the Church of the Monastery at Medina, he heard in the depths of his soul the words: "Thy prayer is granted"; and years afterwards the Venerable Anne of Jesus was supernaturally assured that, in answer to his prayer, his baptismal innocence had been confirmed at his first Mass, 1567.

After his first Mass, Father John of St. Matthias returned to his studies at Salamanca where he continued the observance of that rule within another rule, which taxed his bodily and mental power to the utmost. He was beginning to realise the incompatibility of the primitive life with that led by the friars of the Mitigation; and was about to pass from the Carmelites to the Carthusians when the Will of God, as to the fulfilment of the prophecy made some years previously, was manifested to him.

In the Office for the feast of Saint John of the Cross the following words occur: "Sanctae Teresiae comes divinitus datus est." He was given by God as companion to Saint Teresa—and in the decrees of the Church, she is said to have accomplished her mission with Saint John as her helper—"Joanne adjutore." In the following chapter we shall see the working out of the divine plan by these two glorious saints of Carmel.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COADJUTOR OF SAINT TERESA.

WE have seen that about the middle of the fifteenth century the first convent of Carmelite nuns was canonically erected by Blessed John Soreth, under whose direction a community of Beguines had placed themselves. In 1452 Pope Nicholas V. granted permission for their organisation as "Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." They observed the mitigated rule; and had special constitutions. Their numbers increased rapidly in Holland and Belgium, in France, Italy, and Spain.

It was in one of their convents, that of the Incarnation, just outside the walls of Avila, that Saint Teresa made her profession in 1536, about six years before the birth of her future coadjutor. While his brave young spirit was working out its freedom in hospital and College in Medina, her not less heroic soul was finding the rule of the Calced Carmelites too easy, and her convent dwelling too far removed from the pattern which had been shown on the Mount. When he was taking his vows as a friar of the Observance, she had already left behind some five or six-and-twenty years of life under the mitigated rule, and had moreover spent two years, as foundress of the Reform, in the little convent of Saint Joseph at

Avila. While he had been drinking deeply from the wells of sacred learning in the University of Salamanca, cherishing at the same time his yearnings for the austere life of the Carthusians, she had been occupied with her second foundation at Medina del Campo, as well as with prayers and plans for the establishment of two reformed houses of friars for which the General had given permission in order that suitable confessors and directors might be provided for the nuns. Unknown to each other the two saints were now at the time and place ordained from all eternity for their first meeting.

The General of the Carmelites, Father John Baptist Rubeo, when making his canonical visitation at Avila, had not only approved of what Saint Teresa had already done, but had given her leave to found, in the Province of Castile, two houses of the Reform for friars. It was quite natural, therefore, that when establishing her convent at Medina, she should discuss her project with the Prior of the Calced Carmelites there. This was Father Antonio de Heredia, a religious eminent alike for the nobility of his birth and the simplicity of his character. He entered with enthusiasm into the saint's plans for the Reform; and as soon as she made known to him that she had been empowered to extend it to the friars, he offered himself as her first foundation stone. The saint was surprised and somewhat dismayed; for the good friar was no longer young, nor did he seem to possess the physical strength needed to support the austerities of the primitive rule. She could not have forgotten, however, the days when her sisters of the Incarnation had taunted her with undertaking the Reform, when she had not been able to keep the rule of the Mitigation. So she temporised, advising Father Antonio to keep his own counsel, and to put his vocation

to the test by secretly observing, as far as possible in his own monastery, the primitive rule.

At this juncture Father John of Saint Matthias was in Medina del Campo, probably for the vacation. He was accompanied by Padre Orozco, who took the opportunity of paying a visit to Saint Teresa. He confided to her his distress and that of his brethren at the loss of so promising a subject as the young priest who was bent upon passing to the Carthusians. He dwelt upon his eminent gifts of nature and of grace, especially his love of solitude and silence and his wonderful spirit of prayer and penance. As he spoke, Saint Teresa felt that he was describing the very man she needed to begin the Reform among the friars. She begged that he might visit her on the following day; and she spent the night entreating our Lord, if He so willed, to give her this precious foundation stone. She received the consoling assurance that her prayer was granted.

On the morrow the momentous interview took place. Saint Teresa was fifty-two years of age. Father John of Saint Matthias was but twenty-five. Her great gifts of mind and heart had been developed and turned to the best account. She had reached a high degree of mystical contemplation; had written, by order of her director, an account of her soul's experiences; and had completed, for the benefit of her nuns, the first version of her "Way of Perfection."

He, too, had traded well with his talents. From earliest childhood he had been athirst for the knowledge of truth; and he had drunk deeply when its fountains were opened for him, at the Jesuit College in Medina, in his Carmelite cell, and at the University of Salamanca. His mind was filled with the beauty and truth of the

Sacred Scripture. He had mastered the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas; and he knew something of those of Saint Augustine and other doctors of the Church; but, as his own writings so conclusively prove, it was from the prayerful study of both the Old and the New Testament that he chiefly derived his learning and his wisdom. He had already begun to make the ascent of the mountain of perfection:

> "Without other light or guide
> Save that which in his heart was burning;"

and he now cherished but one desire, the perfect union of his soul with God. It was with this end in view that he was on his way to the Carthusian monastery.

He had been unwilling at first to visit Saint Teresa. He shrank from exposing his sensitive soul with its high aspirations and its unfulfilled desires, even to so gifted and holy a woman as he knew her to be; for his brethren in Medina held her in high repute. He had not been long in conversation with her, however, when he felt the influence of the Divine Spirit which animated her every word. Then he opened to her without reserve the doors of his mind and heart. Filled with wonder and joy at the treasures thus revealed, she lost no time in convincing him that God wanted him to be, not a Carthusian, but a Discalced (or barefooted) Carmelite, and one of the foundation stones of the Reform. He consented, only stipulating that she should not keep him waiting too long. It was agreed that, for the present, he should return to Salamanca to complete his studies, while she was finding a house in which to begin the great work.

Meanwhile, Saint Teresa had been requested to found two new convents for her nuns, one at Malagon, the other at Valladolid.

From Malagon, Saint Teresa was obliged to go on

important business to Avila. While there a gentleman offered her a small house in the hamlet of Duruelo, which she thought might serve as the first monastery of the friars. On her way to Valladolid she went to look at it; and found it even more wretched than she had anticipated. Passing on through Medina, where she had also business to transact, she sent for Prior Antonio, and painting the dilapidated little hovel in its true colours, asked whether he would have the courage to live there for a while. She felt sure, she told him, that Our Lord would soon provide a better lodging for His servants. She added that they were more likely to obtain permission for a foundation in such a spot, where it could in no way interfere with the works of the Mitigation. The good friar was not only willing, he was eager to begin his new life at once in the house offered; so the Saint commissioned him to get together what he considered necessary for the foundation.

It was about this time that Saint Teresa made the witty remark so often misinterpreted, that she had "a friar and a half to begin the Reform with." It has generally been supposed that by the "friar" she meant the stately Prior of Medina; while the "half" was a pleasant allusion to the small stature and frail appearance of Father John of St. Matthias. The true explanation, however, was furnished later on by the nuns of Medina, to whom the remark had been made.

During the "Informations" taken in that city, with a view to the beatification of their foundress, they deposed that one day, while they were at recreation, she said gaily: "Help me, my daughters, to give thanks to God our Lord, because we now have a friar and a half to begin the Reform among the religious." Being asked what she meant, she explained that she had found one

friar entirely after her own heart, and another whom she had counselled to put himself to the proof for a while, in order to find out whether or not he would be able to bear the yoke of the primitive rule.

It is true that in a letter to Don Francis de Salcedo, she refers to the short stature of her friar, but in such terms as to indicate that in her opinion he has reached the height of perfection called for by the Reform. "He is little in body," she writes, "but to my mind great in the eyes of God. We shall miss him very much here; for he is wise and has all the qualities required by our way of life. Though he is still quite young, everyone has some good to say of him; and he has constantly practised the most rigorous penance. It is clear that God leads him by the hand; for in spite of the trying circumstances in which he has been placed, and the tests to which I, myself, have put his virtue, the slightest imperfection has never been perceived in his conduct. He has a brave heart and great gifts of mind, of which indeed he has need in order to embrace with so great confidence this new way of life."

Some difficulties had yet to be overcome. The General had given permission for two monasteries of the Reform for friars, subject to the approval of the ex-provincial, Father Angel de Salazar, and of his successor, Father Alonso Gonzalez, as well as of the bishop of Avila. These permissions had not yet been obtained, so Saint Teresa determined to ask her new recruit, who had just completed his fourth year at the University, to accompany her to Valladolid. The nuns would not be enclosed for some days as the workmen were still occupied with the building; so that he would have an opportunity of observing their practice of the primitive rule, and of becoming, in a certain sense, once more a

novice under the direction of the Foundress of the Reform. She would initiate him into its ways as understood and followed by her nnns—the mortifications they underwent with such gaiety of heart, the loving-kindness which bound them to one another, and the manner in which they spent their recreations. These recreations were such in the literal sense of the word. They gave the nuns an opportunity for discovering and making good their shortcomings; while, at the same time, unbending their minds so as to render them better able to endure with gladness the strain of solitude and silence which followed.

By the good Providence of God, the Provincial of the Carmelites came at this time to Valladolid. He was a saintly old man, wishing to put no obstacle in the way of any work of God, yet not able to make up his mind as to the wisdom and opportuneness of the introduction of the Reform among the friars. The Saint plied him with many forcible arguments, and had all but induced him to grant the approbation asked for, when it was promptly secured by the intervention of the Bishop of Avila and his sister, Dona Maria de Mendoza. That virtuous lady's influence was also effectual in obtaining the approval of the ex-provincial, whose consent to the foundation had been the most doubtful of all. In recording the means made use of by divine wisdom to accomplish this work, the Saint seizes the opportunity to profess her entire confidence in God alone. "I wish," she exclaims, "that the Lord would let all the world know how little creatures can do in these matters. He alone has done all. He alone could have raised so high an edifice from so puny a groundwork."

Father Antonio was still detained at Medina; but Father John of Saint Matthias was ready to begin at

once. He had already, in the Chapel of the nuns at Medina, put on the habit of the Reform—a tunic of coarse serge, a brown woollen cassock and scapular, and a white cloak reaching to the knees, but he refrained from wearing it at Valladolid. He took it with him to Duruelo, and there put it on in place of the habit of the Mitigation. We are told that before leaving Valladolid, he knelt to ask Saint Teresa's blessing, as Foundress and Mother of the Reform; while she, in her turn, knelt with her nuns to receive his priestly benediction.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST FRIARS OF THE REFORM.

THE centuries have not so altered the face of the country between Valladolid and Duruelo but that we can easily picture to ourselves the journey of the young friar. We can see him resolutely treading the hard road across the plateau, and coming almost suddenly, with something of a glad surprise, upon the green valley which was to be his new home. "A very sweet and calm solitude," as a modern writer characterises it, "a land made up of charm and intimacy, not transfigured by surpassing beauty, but such a spot as one would choose for its stillness, its subdued brightness." So completely secluded was it that Saint Teresa had spent almost the whole of a long summer day in searching for it. When at last she had discovered the little house, at some distance from the village, she had found it in so filthy and uninhabitable a condition, that she and her companion had been obliged to pass the night in the neighbouring church.

She had our Lord's word for the foundation, however, and with her usual loving trust in Him, she had determined that this wretched hovel should be the Bethlehem of the Reform among the friars. It consisted of a small porch, one dwelling-room, a garret, and a tiny

kitchen, out of which she had mentally constructed the chapel, choir, dormitory and refectory of a temporary monastery. She had inspired her first friar with her own courage and confidence, and explained to him her views with regard to the adaptation of the house, and had sent with him one of the workmen employed on the convent building to help him in carrying out her plans.

He lost no time. By nightfall the porch was transformed into a chapel, decorated with crosses made from branches of trees; the garret had become the choir; the dwelling-room a dormitory of two cells, each with its little window looking towards the altar, and its bed of straw with a stone for pillow; part of the kitchen had been cut off for a refectory, in which a block of wood stood as table, a broken pitcher and two gourd-shells forming the dinner service. Some bread was begged in the village, and friar and workman took their supper together.

The greater part of that night was spent by our Saint in prayer. In the morning he said Mass, then blessed his new habit and clothed himself in it, taking off his shoes and stockings, so as to begin in all its rigour the life of a Discalced (unshod or barefooted) Carmelite. The workman returned to Valladolid; but as there was much yet to be done to render the house fit to live in, our Saint accepted the help offered by his family who, poor as they were, could give their personal service. His brother Francisco, of whom in our first chapter we promised some further details, was a fitting companion at this time. He was some years older than John; and had devoted himself willingly to a life of incessant toil, in order to help his mother, and leave his young brother free to follow the higher way marked

out for him by divine Providence. He had married in 1551; but of his eight children only one grew up, a daughter who became a Cistercian nun, Barbara of the Holy Ghost. After the death of his wife, therefore, Francisco was at liberty to devote himself entirely, as he did, to a life of contemplation and hard labour. He lost no opportunity of serving the brother whom he so revered and loved; and throughout his life was often to be seen working in one or other of the monasteries. He survived Saint John sixteen years, dying in the odour of sanctity at Medina in 1607.

Francisco's wife and mother accompanied him to Duruelo, in order to help in the cleaning of the house, and to see that the friar was not left entirely destitute of the necessaries of life. We can imagine with what wonder and thankfulness, the heroic Catalina beheld her son taking his first steps along the steep, narrow pathway of his new life. They understood one another so well, those two; and Saint Teresa had taken them both into her great heart. She realised what it meant to the mother who had witnessed her son's profession as a friar of the Mitigation at Medina, who had there assisted at his first Mass, and who had counted on having him near her there to the end, to make this new sacrifice; and she bade her nuns at Medina to look upon her as belonging in a special way to the Reform.

Francisco remained with his brother for some time after the others had left Duruelo; and it is from the depositions made by him, that we learn how the first Carmelite friar of the Reform spent those early days. It must always be borne in mind, that to sow the good seed of the word of God had ever been considered as part of the Carmelite vocation. Saint Teresa knew

this perfectly well; and one of her motives in accepting the wretched little house at Duruelo, was the opportunity afforded by its situation, for the evangelisation of the neighbouring villages. The ignorance and spiritual destitution of the peasants scattered over the sierras was great; and the difficulties to be surmounted in reaching them made the work all the more meritorious. Her first friar entered into her views, and went barefooted far beyond the precincts of his monastery in search of his straying sheep. He would return, often quite worn out with fatigue, but full of joy, to his only real rest, his silent and prolonged contemplation. According to Francisco, he could not get back fast enough to his beloved cell; and there were days when he could not wait till he had reached it, but would sit down by some lonely spring to eat the bread he had with him, and then, for long hours, to pour out his soul in adoration and thanksgiving, and prayer for souls.

Meanwhile, the Prior of Medina, had been settling his affairs and collecting alms for the new monastery. He went to see Saint Teresa at Valladolid, quite elated by his success; but the Saint was unable to congratulate him on it, so meagre did it appear to her. She even laughed outright when he triumphantly displayed his greatest treasure, five hour-glasses with which to ensure regularity! He was very much in earnest, however, and having resigned his charge, set out for Duruelo, the first sight of which, as he afterwards told Saint Teresa, inundated his soul with joy. "He and his companion found themselves in a paradise of delights," writes the Saint, and she adds:

"I conjure you, my Sisters, and you, my Fathers, for the love of our divine Master, never let your buildings lose their character of extreme simplicity . . . Experience

has taught me that there is more of the interior spirit, even more of natural joy, when the body lacks its conveniences, than when it is spaciously lodged and at its ease. What advantage can we derive from these great buildings, since we have only the use of one cell? What does it matter whether that is large and beautiful or not, since we have not to pass our time in gazing at walls? . . . O how sweet would everything become to us, if only we were thoroughly convinced that the less we have below, the greater will be our happiness in that eternity where the dwellings will be proportionate to the love with which we have imitated the life of our good Jesus."

On the twenty-eighth of November, 1568, Father Antonio reached Duruelo, accompanied by a member of his former community in deacon's orders. The night was passed in prayer; and on the following day, the first Sunday of Advent, after the two priests had said Mass, the three friars renewed their vows, promising to live until death under the primitive rule of Saint Albert, as approved by Pope Innocent IV. Henceforward they would be known as Antony of Jesus, afterwards named Prior by the Provincial, John of the Cross, Subprior, and Master of Novices, when these should come to the Reform, and Brother Joseph of Christ, Sacristan. The names of the little community thus represented their one ideal, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

In the spring of the following year, on her way to found a convent at Toledo, Saint Teresa passed through Duruelo where she beheld the Prior sweeping out the entrance to the little chapel. "How is this, father!" she exclaimed, "what has become of our dignity?" With a smiling countenance the good priest uttered a malediction upon the days wherein he had made any

account of it; and joyfully pointed out to the Foundress the little hermitages where, instead of going to rest after Matins, they often remained so absorbed in prayer that they returned to the choir for Prime covered with the snowflakes which had fallen upon them unperceived. The Saint had her fears lest such excessive austerities should ruin their health, and she ventured to remonstrate with them on the subject; but they only went on their way rejoicing, while she was fain to accuse herself of want of courage and to give God thanks for the valour of His servants.

Continuing her journey, she reached Toledo on the eve of the Annunciation, 1569; but only succeeded in completing the foundation by the feast of Pentecost, having spent nearly two months in strenuous toil and anxiety. She was looking forward thankfully to a little time of rest at the Master's feet, when an urgent message from the Princess of Eboli summoned her to Pastrana, to make a foundation there. She went to kneel before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, told Him how fatigued she felt, and asked Him to help her so to defer complying with the demands of the Princess as not to offend her and risk depriving the Reform of her powerful protection. Swift was the answer from the Tabernacle to her heart. Our Lord told her to make no delay in going to Pastrana; for that there was question of more than the convent. She was to take with her the rule and the constitutions.

She at once laid the whole matter before her confessor, but without mentioning what our Lord had said to her. Such was her usual way of acting in order that she might run no risk of being deluded. She would beg our Lord to make His will known to her spiritual guides, whose direction she would then follow in absolute peace

and confidence. In this instance her confessor was of opinion that she should go to Pastrana without delay. She set out next morning, breaking the journey at Madrid, where she lodged in the Franciscan convent. There she learned the motive of our Lord's command. He meant her to found at Pastrana the second monastery for friars; and the man who was to be its chief pillar was at that moment in Madrid.

Mariano de Azzaro was a native of Bitonto in Naples, where he had been by turns a brilliant scholar and a distinguished man of affairs. He had joined the Military Order of Saint John of Jerusalem; he had been unjustly imprisoned; and, when set free, he had not only forgiven his calumniators, but had spent a large sum in saving them from the consequences of their perjury. Such close following of Christ had doubtless won for him the call to a religious life; but he had not found any existing Order which corresponded with his ideals as to prayer, and solitude, and manual labour. For some years he had shared the life of certain hermits in the desert of Tardon near Cordova; the Council of Trent had decreed that all hermits should live under an approved rule; and Mariano was on his way to Rome to ask an exemption from this decree for the hermits of Tardon.

As he related all this to Saint Teresa, she realised how fully the Reform would satisfy his desires, and how valuable a member he was likely to prove. Showing him the rule, she pointed out how completely it would satisfy his aspirations and left him to think it over. Next morning he came to her with his mind quite made up, wondering, as he told her, at the speedy change in his mind that had been effected by a woman. She could smile at his naïve observation, as she lifted up her

heart in grateful admiration at the ways of God with men.

The monastery was soon established. The Prince and Princess gave the means; Father Anthony of Jesus was summoned to become Prior; and St. Teresa set to work with her nuns to make habits for Mariano and his companion. This was Giovanni Marducci who had also passed through various phases of life, having been by turns sculptor, hermit, painter, then again hermit. He had known Mariano in Naples, had welcomed him to the desert of Tardon, and with him was willing to join the Reform. Saint Teresa realised the sublime simplicity hidden beneath his chosen name as a Carmelite friar, John of Misery; and he so beheld her supernatural grace and dignity, as to be able to transfer to canvas the true charm of her countenance. He painted her portrait at Seville, where it is still preserved.

Meanwhile the holiness and zeal of the friars at Duruelo had attracted to their confessionals numerous penitents from the surrounding districts, among them Don Luis of Toledo, lord of five cities and a relative of the Duke of Alba. At Mancera, not far from Duruelo, he had built a church in which to enshrine a famous picture of Our Lady of which Saint Teresa wrote: "It is so beautiful that I have never seen one equal to it; and I am not alone in my opinion." This church, together with the means of building a monastery, Don Luis wished to bestow upon the Discalced Friars; but it was not until after the foundation at Pastrana had multiplied vocations that the offer was accepted.

In June, 1570, John of the Cross was commissioned to transfer thither the community of Duruelo; and in a short time he had under his charge fourteen novices, some having come from the monasteries of the Miti-

gation, others from a secular career. Among these was a learned doctor of Salamanca who had not conceived a life of poverty and privation as excluding the use of a well-stocked library. He ventured to comment on the necessity of more and better books on spiritual subjects; and received in consequence a lesson calculated to test his good will and true religious vocation. Father John of the Cross presented him with a child's first catechism of Christian doctrine, bidding him spell it through and ponder on its meaning without wishing for any other book. The novice obeyed with admirable simplicity, following his master's injunction strictly for several days, during which God granted him many spiritual favours. He became an exemplary member of the Order, and was eventually appointed Provincial.

In October, 1570, our Saint was transferred from Mancera to Pastrana with the title of Vicar, to train the Novices there in the absence of Father Anthony of Jesus who usually accompanied Saint Teresa on her journeys. The monastery was built on the almost circular summit of a high hill, with three lovely valleys radiating from it, and in the distance other lofty hills covered with luxuriant vegetation on their lower slopes. Higher up there were olive groves and pine forests, through which many sparkling streams coursed along, adding to the romantic beauty of the spot. It was a fitting abode for contemplation and spiritual re-birth; and there, under the guidance of their saintly and learned master, the novices made wonderful progress in perfection.

From Pastrana, Saint John was sent to Alcala de Henares to take charge of the house of studies in connection with the university, which had recently been established for the friars of the Reform. He shared to

the full Saint Teresa's view as to the necessity of learning for spiritual directors, and was eminently suited to his new post. Before leaving Pastrana, he confided the novices to the carè of Father Angel of Saint Gabriel, upon whom he impressed the duty of imbuing them with the true spirit of Carmel, a love of solitude and silence and the sanctification of labour by prayer. The zeal of the new novice-master, however, outran his discretion. He laid upon the young friars, unaccustomed to the yoke, burdens which they were unable to bear. He exposed them to the mockery of seculars by public penances and humiliations; and he exacted from them austerities rivalling those of the ancient fathers of the desert. In short, he was running the risk of ruining the health of the novices and the reputation of the monastery.

Father Anthony of Jesus, on being informed of these extravagances, lost no time in recalling to Pastrana Father John of the Cross who met the difficulties of the situation gently but firmly. He upheld the good intentions and personal virtues of the novice-master; but he required him to put an end to the innovations which he had introduced. Father Angel appealed to Saint Teresa who, with her usual wisdom and tact, referred the question to certain distinguished theologians, among whom was the learned Dominican, Father Banez. All answers were in favour of the action taken by Father John of the Cross who, having seen the right order of things established at Pastrana, went back to the college at Alcala. There he accomplished the difficult task of teaching the young friars how to unite prayer with study, so as to get the full benefit out of both. So well did they imbibe his spirit that, as they passed through the streets of Alcala,

to and from the university lectures, their modest bearing and serene countenances had a most beneficial effect and excited universal admiration.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TYPICAL CONFESSOR AND DIRECTOR.

"THERE is not to be found in John of the Cross any trace of that disquieting blend of a speculative mind with an activity which seeks, as it were, a utilitarian output for what properly belongs to the innermost depths of the soul. Not that one could for a moment suppose him to have had a dislike for the work entrusted to him by the Reform. But he shrank from holding any office which might resemble a secular post. There can be no doubt but that in the early days of the Reform his natural bent was consulted; he is the teacher who transmits a doctrine. We see him in this capacity at Duruelo, at Mancera, at Pastrana, at Alcala. Hence we can easily distinguish one of his permanent characteristics—his comprehension and love of teaching; the greatness of the work, the silence in which it might be carried on, the intimate outpourings of soul which it permitted. When John of the Cross gives himself up to the task of teaching he is not in any way going against his heart's desire. But let no one expect to see him directing exteriorly the monastic life of his Order so as to draw all eyes upon it. And if Saint Teresa makes no mention of him in connection with enterprises to be undertaken, or negociations to be carried through, it is

because she knows how far above all such things is the sphere in which he moves."

This free translation, almost paraphrase, of a passage in Dr. Baruzi's recent book, "Saint Jean de la Croix et le problème de l'expérience mystique," forms a suitable opening for this chapter, in which we shall consider the period included between 1572, when the Saint was named chaplain and confessor to the nuns of the Incarnation convent at Avila, and 1577, when he was imprisoned at Toledo. As the Rev. Benedict Zimmerman remarks, in his scholarly review of Dr. Baruzi's work (Tablet 1925): "It is instructive here to examine the intercourse between the two saints, and to see to what an extent they reacted on each other. Although they had repeatedly met in different places, they only came into close personal contact in April, 1572, when Saint John became confessor to the convent of the Incarnation at Avila of which Saint Teresa was Prioress. Saint Teresa had by that time already reached the highest state of her mystical life. For one year and four months, the two saints were practically living under the same roof, and there can be no doubt that Saint John was Saint Teresa's director as well as confessor."

Let us then, as Father Benedict advises, examine the facts; proceeding with due reverence and relying on the help of the Saints, of whose innermost life we endeavour to get at least a glimpse. In July, 1571, the Visitor Apostolic named Saint Teresa Prioress of the Incarnation convent at Avila, for three years. It was an almost impossible situation. She was to abandon her children of the Reform to their ever increasing difficulties; and she was to reform the convent of the Incarnation, but only in accordance with the mitigated rule. Two steps that she took ensured the victorious march that followed:

she solemnly renewed her vow to observe in her own person the primitive rule, while guiding her subjects to perfection by the faithful practice of the rule which they professed; and she obtained as chaplain and confessor, Saint John of the Cross.

In the Autumn of 1571 she began the difficult task entrusted to her. Her sweet humility and her capacity for administration combined to secure, in an incredibly short space of time, both the strict observance of the rule and the temporal prosperity of the convent. In the Spring of 1572, Father John of the Cross arrived to help her in building up the interior and essential part of the spiritual edifice in course of construction. He was to devote to this great work nearly six years, years of comparative obscurity during which he was to be the life of the Reform, while others seemed to do more to preserve it from the destruction with which it was threatened.

How did he spend those years? With his companion, German of Saint Matthias, already in his seventy-second year, he took up his abode in a little cottage close to the convent, where together they observed the rule of the discalced friars. He was now free to pray and study sacred lore to his heart's desire; he had, moreover a unique opportunity for the exercise of his singular gift of spiritual direction; and above all he was able to converse freely and frequently with Saint Teresa who had recognised him from the first as her co-worker and companion in Christ. She saw in him a perfect model of that holiness and learning which she deemed indispensable to the confessor of her nuns; and with them she profited to the full by his saintly example and wise direction. She declared that after he had begun his ministry, the government of the community was like working in wax. In a letter to her sister, Dona Juana,

dated September, 1752, she writes: "The discalced friar who is confessor here is doing great things;" and to Philip II. some months later; "The city is in amazement at the exceeding great good he has done here; the people take him for a Saint; in my opinion he is one and has been so all his life."

The mainspring of his sanctity was the poverty of spirit which left him absolutely free to follow His divine Master. In that little cottage at Avila, as formerly at Durnelo, he could find repose in the

> "sweet dark night
> which brings no gloomy shades;"

but rather,

> "The more it blinds, the more delights the soul."
> (O dulce noche escura!)

There he lived the life which later he described so clearly, in his commentary on "The Living Flame of Love," where he shows that in order to receive the gift of pure contemplation, the soul must be "perfectly detached, calm, peaceful, and serene as God is; it must be like the atmosphere, which the sun illuminates and warms in proportion to its calmness and purity. Thus the soul must be attached to nothing, not even to meditation; not to sensible or spiritual sweetness; because God requires a spirit free and annihilated: for every act of the soul, even of thought, of liking or disliking, will hinder and disturb it, and break that profound silence of sense and spirit necessary for hearing the deep and soft voice of God, who, in the words of Osee, speaks to the heart in solitude." (Living Flame. Stanza III. par. 38).

He only quitted his beloved retreat to minister to the nuns whom he led so swiftly and surely up the mountain of perfection; or to hold converse with their Mother, to

whom he was by turns master and pupil. Philosopher and poet, theologian and mystic, as he was; he knew no soul on earth so near akin as hers; no mind more capable of comprehending his doctrine; no heart more ready to give as he gave, all for the love of God. Though she had not yet written "The Interior Castle"—she began it on June 2nd, 1577, and completed it on November 29th of that year—it is reasonable to suppose that her conversations with Saint John at this time, often bore some relation to the infused knowledge which she had received concerning the transformation of the soul into the likeness of God.

It was on the 18th of November, 1572, that this transformation had taken place in her own soul. She had said to Father John of the Cross that she greatly loved to receive a large Host, although she knew that the size of the Sacred Particles made no difference to the Real Presence of our Lord under each. On that day, octave of the feast of Saint Martin, to whom she had a special devotion, she was kneeling at the grating to receive Holy Communion, when she saw Saint John of the Cross break in two the Host he was about to give her, reserving one half for another sister. She thought he did so to mortify her, and possibly complained lovingly to our Lord; for at that moment she beheld him in her innermost soul, and received the pledge of her spiritual nuptials which she describes so vividly in the second chapter of the seventh book of the "Interior Castle."

"There is the same distinction between spiritual espousals and spiritual marriage, as between people who are only betrothed and others who are united for ever in holy matrimony. I have told you that, though I make this comparison because there is none more suitable, yet

these espousals are no more related to our corporal condition than if the soul were a disembodied spirit. This is even more true of the spiritual marriage, for this secret union takes place in the innermost centre of the soul where, God, Himself, must dwell: I believe that no door is required to enter it. I say 'no door is required,' for all I have hitherto described seems to pass through the senses and faculties, as must the representation of our Lord's Humanity; but what passed in the union of the spiritual nuptials is very different. Here God appears in the soul's centre, not by an imaginary, but by an intellectual vision, far more mystic than those seen before . . . As far as can be understood, the soul, I mean the spirit of this soul, is made one with God."

The saint must have spoken of this to Father John of the Cross; for it was her invariable custom not to rely on her personal revelations, but to submit them to her director or some other learned theologian. They understood each other as only those can who have passed, or are passing, through the same experiences. The rapture into which they entered simultaneously, while conversing on the Blessed Trinity in the convent parlour, bears sufficient witness to the love which possessed their souls; and later on, Saint Teresa remarked that it was impossible to speak of God with Father John of the Cross without one or the other falling into a trance. So habitual indeed did his ecstasies become, that he made use of a belt studded with iron points which he could press into his flesh when he felt the rapture beginning, so as to enable him to hear and answer the questions put to him; for his sanctity drew many visitors to the little cottage. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant, holy and sinful; all sought his counsel, his prayers and his blessing; and to all he gave

of his best for God's sake. He was living, at this time in all its perfection the life of a true Carmelite friar; and his soul was being made ready to endure without shrinking the awful suffering in store for him.

Miracles were not wanting to attest the favour with which God looked upon His faithful servant, One of the nuns, Maria Yiera, died almost suddenly before he could reach the infirmary. The infirmian was inconsolable, and complained to the saint of her sister's dying without the last sacraments. He made no reply to her moans and murmers, but went straight into the choir where he remained in prayer until she came to call him as the sister was giving signs of life. "Are you satisfied, my child?" he said gently as he passed back into the infirmary. There he found the sister conscious, administered to her the Last Sacraments, and remained by her side until she had peacefully given up her soul to God. But the greatest of his miracles was the ease with which he led all the sisters along the narrow-path. One of them ventured to remark upon this, saying: "How do you manage it, Father?" He smiled and answered simply: "God does it all, making use of this poor little guide, so that His spouses may be worthy of the Order into which they have been received." They did indeed become more and more worthy of their high calling; and several of them begged to be admitted into the Reform. Saint Teresa gladly received them; but they did not all persevere, either through lack of physical strength or of some essential quality of mind or character. The Saint, therefore, decided to keep her own convents, as originally constituted, quite apart from The Incarnation.

Her triennial as Prioress of that convent expired on October 6th, 1574. She had then been absent from her

post for about one year and eight months; and it was doubtful whether she would in future be able to remain for any length of time at Avila. This was probably the reason why some of the nuns petitioned the Provincial against her re-election.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

It has been well said, that it is easier not to tell a lie than to tell the truth. By not meddling with matters concerning which one has but little exact information, and by a temperate use of words when commenting on current events, it is possible to avoid a lie; but it is not always possible to tell the whole of the truth, since to do so might mean the betrayal of a confidence, or a sin of detraction.

If this difficulty occurs in ordinary conversation and correspondence, much more may it be expected to arise when there is a question of persons or events far distant in time or place. However honest a biographer may be, however carefully and intelligently he may compare the results of recent research with contemporary chronicles, he is often confronted by contradictory statements owing to different, sometimes completely opposite, points of view.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if students of the history of the Carmelite Order have reached the conclusion that the early accounts of the period of which we are about to treat present, not merely an inadequate but a distorted view of the contest which arose between the Calced and Discalced friars in Spain.

It might be easier to omit the story from these pages, than to tell it as it should be told. Easier, but not better : the better way is so to reconstruct the conditions of time and place, that the reader may form a just idea of the nature of the contest and a right estimate of the characters of the principal persons engaged in it.

First, it is necessary to conceive a clear idea of the Spanish people in the 16th century. After the discovery of the New World, Spain had become for a time, but only for a time, the most prosperous industrial and commercial country in the world. But her ablest men rushed off to America in search of gold ; and their places were taken by the German and Genoese bankers and traders who profited most by the changed conditions of life. The Spaniards of the homeland grew gradually poorer and prouder, clinging more than ever to what a modern writer has aptly styled their "passionate local independence and sense of individuality inherited from their ancestors." For the Spanish Peninsula in Medieval times was a land of little Kingdoms, each with its own code of laws and its characteristic manners and customs: the Castilians, for example, considering themselves as a race quite apart from the Andalusians, with whom they would not willingly mix. We emphasise this point, in view of the difficulties with regard to the Reform, which had their origin in Andalusia.

A second idea to be conceived is that of the character of Philip II, great grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, who has been rightly named "The first truly Spanish King of Spain." He saw in himself the personal centre of the greatness of his kingdom, and his dominant idea was, that Church and State alike should be governed according to his views. From this root idea sprang his

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paramount desire, to see the Religious Orders in Spain free from all foreign influence or interference. Hence he had at heart their Reform, *i.e.* their remodelling on Spanish lines. Even the Carthusians, the most observant of all the ancient Orders, was separated from the Grande Chartreuse, and became an entirely Spanish Congregation. It was this idea and this desire, which caused him to declare himself the Protector of the Carmelite Reform.

The first convent of the Reform—St. Joseph's at Avila had, it is true, been founded by special licence from the Holy See, and placed under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary; but St. Teresa had in the first place applied for the permission of the Carmelite Provincial in Spain—Gregory Fernandez—who had shown manifest willingness to grant it. The opposition of the Nuns of the Incarnation, and others, caused the difficulties which brought about recourse to Rome. When, after the foundation, violent opposition to its existence was raised in the city, Teresa at once obeyed the order of the then Provincial, Angel de Salazar—and returned to the convent of The Incarnation. She remained there until authorised by the Provincial to return to her little community at St. Joseph's. Moreover, she welcomed the General—John Baptist Rubeo—when he made his Canonical Visitation, and submitted to him all her plans and desires. He approved of all she had done, and readily granted her leave to make other foundations.

After he had left Avila, she conceived the idea of the foundation of monasteries for Discalced friars who should be suitable confessors and directors for her nuns, and wrote to the General for permission. He readily granted her request; and, later on, gave leave for additional friaries. But it is to be noted that he always

prohibited their being founded in Andalusia. Moreover he stipulated that if, later on, this prohibition should be disregarded, the permission then granted should cease to have any effect.

As we have already stated, the Andalusians differed radically from the Castilians. They were a turbulent people, impatient of subjection to any but their own native rulers. It was no matter for surprise, then, that when during his Canonical Visitation (1566-7) the Carmelite General—an Italian—found much to blame and forbid in their monasteries, the friars of the Mitigation should seize the opportunity to complain to the Holy See of his lack of understanding and sympathy, and to obtain, without his knowledge, a Papal brief transferring the Spanish provinces from his jurisdiction to that of two Apostolic Visitors (both Dominicans.)

The visitation under this new decree seems to have caused no trouble in Castile; but the Visitor in Andalusia was adverse from exercising his powers. He found a way out of his difficulty by passing on his commission to the friars of the Reform. Then the struggle began. It arose, not so much from the more or less strict observance of the rule, as from the natural resentment of the friars of the Mitigation at being suddenly placed under the Discalced friars whom they regarded as upstarts. Their indignation grew hotter, when they learned that the General had absolutely prohibited the extension of the Reform into Andalusia; and it blazed out when Father Jerome Gracian, a young Discalced friar, was named Visitor.

Jerome Gracian was born at Valladolid in 1545, his father being the King's secretary, his mother, the Polish Ambassador's daughter. He was educated at the Jesuit College, from which he passed to the University

of Alcala, where his brilliant success was equalled by his piety and modesty. A distinguished Master of Arts, and a priest at the age of twenty-four, he offered himself to the Society of Jesus, and was willingly accepted. Circumstances delayed his entrance. In the meanwhile he was invited by the Carmelite Prioress in Pastrana to preach at the clothing of a nun in the convent chapel. His sermon was followed by the grace of his vocation to the Reform, which he joined in 1572.

Saint Teresa had received glowing accounts of this new recruit. She corresponded with him but did not meet him until she was at Veas in 1575. At this first interview, she tells us, all her troubles vanished, for our Lord showed her, as in a picture, all that he would do for the Order. The vision was true; but if the picture had extended throughout the whole of Father Gracian's life, the Saint's joy would have been chastened by the sight of his expulsion from the Order. Still joy would have remained the dominant note in her mind and heart, for she would have beheld his rehabilitation by Pope Clement VIII. in 1596, and his holy death in 1614. We have given this brief sketch of his career in order to help our readers to understand the prominent part he took in the affairs of the Order at this time. Although but recently professed, and only thirty years of age, he became, as we have seen, Visitor of both the Calced and Discalced Carmelites in Spain. (1574).

As was to be expected, the friars of the Mitigation were greatly exasperated by this measure, and they lost no time in appealing against it to the General. Seven years before, Father Rubeo had conceived both esteem and affection for the Reform. He had kept up a fatherly correspondence with Saint Teresa, who had duly acquainted him with all details concerning it, as far

as the nuns were concerned. But the independent way in which the Apostolic Visitor, Father Vargus, O.P., had acted in transferring his office and powers to the Discalced friars, the neglect of Father Gracian in not laying his plans before the General, above all in not carrying out his wishes with regard to Andalusia, together with the not unreasonable remonstrances of the Calced friars, and the impossibility of at once investigating matters on the spot, moved Father Rubeo to ask the Holy See to revoke the powers of the Apostolic Visitors. His petition was granted in August, 1574; but he deferred its execution until he could lay all the documents before the Chapter of Piacenza, held in the spring of the following year.

In 1567 the Andalusians had appealed to the Holy See against the General in order to get superiors of their own nation—the Apostolic Visitors. They now, 1574-5, appealed to the General and the Chapter against the Visitors. It was, therefore, decreed at Piacenza that the houses of the Discalced friars, which had been founded in Andalusia without the General's permission, should be suppressed; and Father Jerome Tostado, a Portuguese friar of the Mitigation, able and experienced, was charged with the execution of this decree in the capacity of Visitor of Spain appointed by the General. Upon this, the friars of the Reform appealed to the Papal Nuncio, Monsignore Ormaneto, who appointed Father Jerome Gracian Superior of the friars and nuns of the Reform. Moreover, he confirmed him in his office of Visitor in Andalusia.

We can easily imagine the state of turmoil and conflict into which the Carmelite Order in Spain was then plunged. On the one side stood the well-established monasteries of the Mitigation with the

General at their head; on the other, the houses of the Reform, protected by the King and the Papal Nuncio.

What was Saint John of the Cross doing all this time? Why were not his prayers and those of Saint Teresa averting all this evil? "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts." (Isaias lv., 8, 9). The two great lights of Carmel were shining with ever-increasing brightness before the Lord; and their prayers were ascending as incense in His sight. They suffered greatly, no doubt, because of the oppression of their people; but they kept their souls in peace and awaited the good pleasure of the Master.

Saint Teresa was elected Prioress of her first convent, Saint Joseph's, Avila, in 1574. She remained there for a few days, and was then permitted to occupy herself with the pressing needs of her convents at Salamanca, Valladolid, Pastrana, and Segovia. She had begun at Salamanca her book of "The Foundations," and was looking forward to a period of comparative leisure for continuing it, when she was obliged to resume her journeys. In 1575 we find her writing to Philip II. to beg the King to use his influence to secure that the Reform should be constituted a separate Province of the Order, with Father Jerome Gracian at its head.

Father John of the Cross was still at his post as Chaplain and Confessor to the Nuns of the Incarnation. His reputation for sanctity increased daily; and his special power over the evil spirits became more and more manifest; cases of diabolical possession were, at that period, not infrequent in Spain; and Satan was constrained to declare that the exorcist he most feared

was Friar John of the Cross. We shall not, therefore, be considered fanciful or unreasonable, if we impute the atrocious persecution our Saint was about to undergo, in part, at least, to the suggestions of the arch-enemy of souls.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VICTIM OF DIVINE LOVE.

In March 1576, the delegate of the General, Father Tostado, reached Spain. In May 1576 was held a Provincial Chapter to which were summoned all the Priors of Castile. Those of the Reform came late, having been detained by the Nuncio. When they arrived, a fusion of the two branches of the Order had already been decreed. Calced and Discalced were to occupy the same monasteries; but each friar was to be at liberty to follow the rule of his profession, those of the Reform being distinguished as contemplatives. The impracticability of this measure has been pointed out in Chapter III.

The news of this chapter and its decrees were at once carried to Madrid. Philip II. took the part of the Reform, instructing Father Gracian to put the affair into the hands of the President of the Royal Council and the Grand Inquisitor of Spain. Father Tostado's patents were disallowed on the plea that they had not received the royal exequatur; and later on the General's delegate was forced to leave Spain.

Encouraged by this support and morally certain of the Nuncio's approbation, Father Gracian went so far as to convene a Chapter—the first of the Reform—at

Almodovar del Campo. In his opening speech he said:

"War has been declared against us, not by our enemies, but by our friends and brethren; not by the evil-minded, but by just men and saints, that is why the contest cannot but be most painful. The Chapter of the Order has condemned us; our Father General has repulsed us; the Cardinal Protector will not listen to us because he supports our adversaries. Urged by these adversaries, our Holy Father Pope Gregory XIII., has revoked the Bulls of his saintly predecessor, Pius V. Father Tostado has arrived from Rome with unlimited powers, backed up by his own learning, intelligence and courage. He has come to execute the decrees of which you are aware.

I like to think that those who are pursuing us are animated by good intentions: they desire to defend the mitigated rule of their profession; but is it not as just for us to defend the primitive rule which we profess? Is it not the more ancient and the more perfect? Let us admit that both sides are in the right. Our brethren have a good intention, but we have a better one. Courage and confidence, then . . . Patience wins all."

The last sentence quoted embodies the advice of Saint Teresa who, in her convent at Toledo, whither she had retired after her condemnation by the General Chapter, was praying and suffering for the safety of the Reform. She kept in touch with Father Gracian, wrote to all who could be of service, prepared notes and documents to be laid before the General and others in Rome, and hoped for the erection of the Reform into a separate province. That was the only way she saw, out of the overwhelmingly complex situation which had arisen. She recognised the almost impossible

position of Father Gracian and urged him strongly to resign his post as Visitor; but he, sanguine to excess, would not listen to her counsels. He acted, to say the least, in a most unwise and unseemly manner at the Chapter which he had summoned on his own authority; for he asserted that his powers being derived from the Papal Nuncio were superior to those of the General. He established the Reform as a separate Spanish congregation, intimating that he did so by order of the Nuncio. But letters exist from Mgr. Ormaneto to the Cardinal Secretary of State which go to prove that Father Gracian had acted upon a merely presumed sanction of the Nuncio who, however, always remained the friend and protector of the Reform.

In June 1577, Mgr. Ormaneto died and was succeeded by Mgr. Sega, an Italian bishop and kinsman to Pope Gregory XIII. Before leaving Rome he had been officially informed of the state of affairs, but only from one point of view, the other never having been submitted to the General. He arrived in Spain with the desire to bring about such mutual concessions as should restore peace to the Order. The consequence was that the newly elected superiors among the friars of the Mitigation gave full vent to their wrath, and poured out its vials upon those of the Reform.

The Triennial of the Prioress, who had replaced Saint Teresa at the Incarnation convent in 1574, ended in October 1577. The majority of the nuns then elected Saint Teresa. Thereupon, the Provincial of the Mitigation who was presiding, on the plea that Saint Teresa was no longer a member of the community of the Incarnation, tore up their voting-papers and excommunicated the voters. Next day he held another election with the minority, and sent the name of the prioress

chosen by them to Father Tostado for confirmation. The opposing majority, however, declared that they would only obey her as Vice-Prioress. They were therefore, kept under the ban, without Mass or Sacraments, and completely isolated from their confessor and their friends. In the end the affair was brought before the Council of the King. It was decided that Saint Teresa should be free to refuse or accept her election, and that the Nuncio should be requested to remove the censure placed upon the religious. When the Nuncio received the decree of the Council, he passed it on to Father Tostado who, accepting the inevitable, charged with its execution Father Maldonado, the Prior of the Mitigation in Toledo.

Meanwhile Father John of the Cross remained quietly in the little cottage attached to the Incarnation convent, not commenting upon the troubles of the Order, but living the life which he held to be that of its true children. Father Maldonado was commissioned to secure his person and to bring him to Toledo. The ostensible reason for his arrest was that the Chapter of 1575 had ordered the Discalced friars who were living outside the monasteries of their profession, to return to them within three days under pain of being treated as rebels. During the lifetime of Mgr. Ormaneto, Saint John was licensed to live at the Incarnation convent, but with the coming of the new Nuncio his license would have had to be renewed. This apparently had not been done ; therefore the Saint could be considered, theoretically, at least, as rebelling against the orders of the General Chapter.

On the night between the 3rd and 4th December the cottage was broken into and the cells of the two friars rifled for letters and documents. The Saint and his

companion were then carried off to the monastery of the Calced friars in Avila, whence Father Maldonado conducted him next morning to Toledo. There he came face to face with the Visitor, Father Tostado. There is no record of what took place; but it is most probable that the Saint, in imitation of His Divine Master, kept silence. His doing so would add to the fury of his judges, who condemned him to be scourged and locked up as a rebel.

His prison was more like a cupboard than a cell. It was a sort of recess, not quite ten feet by six, opening into a large room in which passing guests were usually lodged. It had neither air nor light but that which made its way through a loophole, not three inches wide, cut in the wall close to the ceiling, and opening, not into the fresh air, but only into a corridor: His bed consisted of planks joined together with a single coverlet. He saw no one, spoke to no one, but the friar who acted as warder. He had no book but his breviary, which he did his best to read by the scanty light which at certain hours came through the loophole. Every evening he was conducted to the refectory, where he took his meal of bread and water. Then followed the reiterated reproaches of the Prior, and the terrible scourging inflicted on his bared shoulders by each of the brethren in turn.

His patience and sweetness under this cruel treatment were invincible. He even longed for the hour of his torture; but the friars themselves grew tired of it. By degrees it was inflicted less frequently: three times a week, and then on Fridays only. At last they left him alone in his cell; but as the summer came on, its stifling heat was in itself a martyrdom. Yet this was not his greatest suffering, for the brethren would gather round

the door of his dungeon and talk to each other, loud enough for him to hear, of reports that were being circulated as to the disgrace of Saint Teresa, the condemnation of Father Gracian, and the total ruin of the Reform.

There were moments of dereliction when it seemed as if God had forsaken him; but there were also moments of consolation, when his cell was flooded with a brightness greater than that of the sun at noonday. On one of these occasions the gaoler perceived the light; and, thinking the cell had been broken into, he hastily brought the Prior and two others to the spot; but when they reached it the light had disappeared. Afterwards the Saint related how sometimes that miraculous light shone the whole night through; and how on one occasion, towards the end of his imprisonment, he heard coming from its midst the voice of our Lord saying: "Juan, I am here; be not afraid; I shall set thee at liberty."

On the Eve of the Assumption, 1578, the Prior went to have a look at the prisoner, whom he found kneeling in his cell rapt in prayer. Not perceiving the superior the Saint remained motionless; whereupon Father Moldonado, taxing him with disrespect, pushed him rudely; but softened by his gentle excuses, asked of what he was thinking. "To-morrow will be Our Lady's Assumption," was the reply; "what a joy it would be to say Mass in her honour!" "Not in my time," harshly answered the Prior as he turned away.

The festival brought no consolation to the captive; but towards evening on the following day, Our Lady came to visit him. "Have patience, my son," she said; "thy trial is almost at an end; thou shalt leave thy prison, say Mass, and be glad." During the course of

the octave, our Lord, Himself, came with His blessed Mother, and bade His faithful servant be of good cheer; for that He who had enabled Eliseus to divide the waters with the mantle of Elias and so cross the river, would set him free without difficulty. Once more Our Lady appeared to him, showing him in a vision a window of the monastery, from which he could see the river Tagus. She told him he was to descend through that window and put his trust in her.

By God's good Providence it had come to pass, that his harsh keeper had been replaced by a friar from Valladolid, who was soon convinced of the heroic sanctity of his captive, and did all in his power to soften the rigours of his imprisonment. When the community were all out of the way, either at recreation together, or taking the siesta customary during the burning heats, he would unlock the door of the Saint's cell, and permit him to get some fresh air and exercise, by walking up and down the room. He even allowed him to go into the corridor; and there, to his great joy, he recognised the window shown him by Our Lady. He realised that the hour of his deliverance was at hand; and thanking his compassionate keeper for the kindness with which he had treated him, begged him to accept a crucifix which he had been wearing beneath his scapular.

That night, whether by design or forgetfulness, the keeper left his lantern behind him. The prisoner was thus enabled to make his preparations for escape. He succeeded in loosening the staple of the lock of his door; and he tore his coverlet into strips which he knotted together so as to form species of rope by which to descend from the window. Towards nightfall, however, the Provincial arrived with several friars, two of whom were lodged in the room into which the prison-

cell opened, and through which the fugitive would have to pass. Fortunately they left its door open on account of the heat.

After praying for some hours, Saint John took his breviary, the lamp, and the rope, and with a gentle shake let the loosened staple fall to the ground. The sleeping friars, awakened by the noise, called aloud: "Who is there?" but receiving no answer, quickly fell asleep again. Then the fugitive passed cautiously through the room, and along the corridor to the window of his vision. Inserting the iron rod of the lamp into a hole beneath the window ledge, he fastened to it the makeshift rope; and, calling upon God and Our Lady to come to his assistance, he began the descent in the darkness. The rope proved to be too short; and he was suspended by it in mid-air, at a considerable distance from the ground. He let it go, and fell upon a heap of stones without being either stunned or hurt. Two feet farther on, he would have fallen down a precipice into the Tagus.

He found himself on a narrow ledge of rock, without any idea as to how he should proceed. As he prayed for guidance, he saw a dog gnawing a bone; he drew near, and the animal bounded over a wall and disappeared from sight. How could he scale that wall in his weak state? Again he prayed, and again supernatural help was given him. He was transported to the top of the wall, which he recognised as the enclosure of a Franciscan convent described to him by his keeper. He could find no way out; when suddenly a bright light shone before him from the midst of which he heard a voice say: "Follow me." He followed, and was soon standing on the top of a wall, from which a sloping bank descended to the ground. By this he reached the

street, when the light vanished. He spent the remainder of the night in the porch of a large house; and at daybreak made his way to the convent of the Reform. He had some difficulty in convincing the portress of his identity: but once it was realised, there was great joy and thanksgiving at his miraculous deliverance.

As soon as his flight was discovered, Father Maldonado sent some of the friars, accompanied by officers of justice, to recapture him. They naturally went to look for him in the convent, where he actually was at the time. It happened, however, that one of the nuns was ill and had asked for a confessor. Father John of the Cross was promptly sent to her; and after searching every room in the house except the infirmary, his pursuers went away disappointed. When the nuns had made a new habit for him, he was secretly conducted by a great friend of the Reform to the hospital of the Holy Cross, of which this gentleman was Administrator. There he remained concealed for a few days, until at last he found himself safe among his own brethren at Almodovar del Campo. We can imagine the joy with which he was welcomed, if we realise the crisis through which the Reform was at this moment passing.

As we have seen, the opposing authorities were, on the one side, the Papal Nuncio Mgr. Sega; on the other, Philip II. who could exercise his right of veto against any ecclesiastical appointment not approved by his royal council. By this authority the Carmelite Visitor, Father Tostado, was deprived of his powers. Then the Nuncio, misinformed as to the conduct and disposition of the Discalced friars, placed them under the control of the superiors of the Mitigation.

Father Gracian utterly cast down by this last measure, remained hidden in Pastrana, refusing to sign his name

to any document; while Father Mariano, boiling over with indignation, was for immediate organised resistance. Saint Teresa had as much as she could do, to lift up the heart of the one, and to calm the temper of the other. To Father Gracian she wrote: "If you give way to a melancholy so great in the midst of the troubles which surround you, what would you have done in the prison of Father John of the Cross? To Father Mariano she said: "I beg of you, Reverend Father, to hold your peace . . . Remember that at this moment we are called upon to suffer and to obey." Meanwhile she, herself, was not only obeying and suffering, but employing every means in her power to put an end to the struggle.

On his part, Father Gracian did all he could to conciliate the Nuncio. He welcomed to Pastrana the two Calced friars appointed by him to visit the houses of the Reform; and that with a deference and courtesy so great that they were both edified and enlightened. Relying on the good report they had given to the Nuncio, he ventured to go to Madrid, with Fathers Anthony of Jesus and Mariano. The step proved to be premature; for the Nuncio, displeased at their having come without his invitation, caused them to be imprisoned in the monastery of the Mitigation. To make matters worse, the King was angered by their having submitted to the Nuncio against his advice, and declared that he would take no further interest in their affairs. In a short time however, the three prisoners were allowed to return to their respective monasteries.

It was at this time when, despairing of obtaining justice either at the hands of the Nuncio or the King, the priors of the Reform were holding a second Chapter at Almondovar, that Saint John of the Cross arrived

there. This Chapter had been convened by Father Anthony of Jesus, as second definitor; for Father Gracian had refused to act any longer as Provincial since the Nuncio had deprived him of his powers. Father John of the Cross was invited to the meeting of the Chapter at which, to his dismay, he heard proposals for the election of a Provincial from among the fathers present, and the immediate erection of the Reform into a separate province of the Order. He earnestly besought his brethren to refrain from such a proceeding, rightly declaring that it would be the beginning of a schism. Nothing should be done in the matter without having first obtained permission of the Holy See. Like Saint Teresa, he could never for a moment think of supporting a measure which bore the least appearance of a want of submission to the Vicar of Christ; and, after all, the Nuncio was the Pope's representative; and the only lawful resistance to his orders was by an appeal to the Pope himself. His counsels did not prevail however. Father Anthony of Jesus was elected Provincial; and two friars were deputed to go to Rome to obtain the confirmation of his election by the Holy See.

When the Nuncio was informed of what had taken place at Almodovar, he annulled the acts of the Chapter, excommunicated all the priors who had taken part in it, and caused Fathers Anthony of Jesus, Mariano, and Gracian to be imprisoned in different monasteries of the Mitigation. He ordered Saint Teresa to shut herself up in her convent at Toledo; and he placed all the houses of the Reform, whether of friars or nuns, under the jurisdiction of the Mitigation. Moreover he forbade the reception of any new members.

Fortunately, Saint John of the Cross had escaped notice; and was able to take up the charge laid upon

him at the Chapter. He was to replace for the time being, one of the envoys to Rome, as Prior of the monastery of Calvary. He was also commissioned to visit on his way thither, the Carmelite convent at Veas, whose prioress at the time was the celebrated Mother Anne of Jesus. We cannot do better than accompany him there in spirit and learn from him as did the inmates of that convent the true meaning of mysticism.

CHAPTER IX.

A TEACHER OF MYSTICAL THEOLOGY.

FIRST let us distinguish between a mystic and a poet. Saint John of the Cross was both; but it is a grave error to suppose that the poetic gift, although not unfitly styled "the vision and the faculty divine," is, even when exercised on the holiest themes, the grace of mysticism. By a sublime flight of the imagination a Dante may soar through one heaven after another, pausing in that of the fixed stars to look back upon the earth "so pitiful of semblance." By the same glorious faculty, a Wordsworth may conceive the mind of the shepherd among the hills of Athol as "rapt in the still communion that transcends the imperfect offices of praise and prayer." By this natural, though truly marvellous gift, a Francis Thompson may perceive that

> "All things by immortal power
> Near or far
> Hiddenly
> To each other linked are,
> That thou canst not stir a flower
> Without troubling of a star."

We could multiply similar instances without quoting a single mystic: for the mystic is not concerned with making poetry; but with aspiring to the closest possible

union with God attainable during this mortal life. It is possible, probable even, that one result of this constant aspiration and (when God sees fit to bestow the gift) of its attainment, may be a breaking forth by the mystic into poetry, or impassioned prose. Witness the "Living Flame of Love," of Saint John of the Cross, or the "Exclamations" of Saint Teresa. But such writings are not the mere outcome of natural imagination, however vivid and lofty; nor are they to be judged by the ordinary canons of art criticism. Their meaning often lies too deep for the grasp of human intelligence; and the mystics, themselves, would be the first to declare the experiences enshrined therein, as unutterable, inexplicable.

Nevertheless, from the works of a Saint Teresa, or a Saint John of the Cross, we may, aided by divine grace, learn to distinguish between the state of contemplation into which any faithful soul may enter, by walking in the narrow way and leaving all to find all; and the state of mystical union, which cannot be attained by personal effort, however holy and sustained. It is the free gift of God to souls on whem He is pleased to bestow it. By this extraordinary grace, the innermost part of the soul, so to speak, the very centre of man's being, comes into touch directly with the spirit of God, and is transformed, not into the substance of the Godhead, but into the likeness of God. There takes place, by the power and will of God, a communication of the Creator to the creature, which transcends not only in degree, but in kind, the permanent indwelling of the Holy Ghost in all souls in a state of grace.

When Saint John of the Cross paid his first visit to the Carmelite convent at Veas, he discovered that some of its inmates were deluded on this point. They had

brought themselves to believe that they were favoured with visions, which Saint John decided to be merely the result of imagination. Like Saint Teresa, he insisted on the fact that the essence of mysticism does not lie in supernatural manifestations, but in the secret touch which gives to the soul an indescribable experimental knowledge and love of God. It is possible that some of the nuns had begun to doubt his ability to form a right judgment with regard to the reality of raptures or visions. Perhaps they thought that it was owing to his never having been the subject of these miraculous favours, that he considered those they imagined themselves to have received, to be illusions. However that may have been, it pleased God to show that his servant was far from being unacquainted with these gratuitous graces (gratiae gratis datae) which are given to certain souls, principally for the benefit of others.

He was in the parlour when Mother Anne of Jesus, wishing to give him some spiritual entertainment, asked one of her nuns to sing some verses which she had composed on the blessedness of suffering:

"Quien no sabe de penas
En este triste valle de dolores
No sabe de buenas;
Ni ha gustado de amores,
Pues penas es el traje de amadores."

So sang the sister:

"Whosoever knows naught of suffering
In this sorrowful vale of tears
Knows not of any good;
Nor has he tasted of love,
Since suffering is the way of lovers."

These words were scarcely ended when the Saint, feeling himself about to pass into an ecstasy, made a sign to

the sister to cease, and grasped the bars of the grille to prevent himself from rising into the air. Nevertheless he remained rapt in God for about an hour. On returning to himself, he said simply that after what our Lord had taught him in his little cell at Toledo, the bare thought of suffering was sufficient to uplift his soul. It was there that he had experienced the agony and the joy which he tried to express in "A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom, Christ."

Unlike the "Ascent of Mount Carmel" and the "Dark Night of the Soul," whose purpose is to make clear the purgation necessary, before the union of the human spirit with its Creator and Lover is possible; the Canticle aims chiefly at portraying the ineffable delights of that union. According to the testimony of a nun at Veas; "When the holy father escaped from prison he took with him a book of poetry he had written while there, containing the verses commencing "In the beginning was the Word"; and those others, "I know the fountain well which flows and runs though it be night;" and the Canticle, "Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?" as far as "O Nymphs of Judea" (Stanza xviii). The remaining verses he composed later on when rector of the college of Baeza (1579-81). Some of the explanations were written at Veas, and others at Granada.

The Canticle formed, as it were, the text of Saint John's instructions to the Carmelites at Veas. At the request of their Prioress, Mother Anne of Jesus, he committed his commentary on them to writing, leaving to posterity a treatise on Mystical Union with God, which can only be compared with the sublime legacy of Saint Teresa on the same subject, "The Interior

Castle of the Soul." We defer all further details concerning these writings to the concluding chapters of our book, where we purpose giving such extracts from them as may induce our readers to study them.

Saint John remained at Veas for about a month before taking up his charge as Vicar of the "Calvario." This monastery derived its name from a hill within its precincts, to which the piety and skill of the friars had given a marked resemblance to Mount Calvary. It was situated amid surroundings well suited to the state of both his body and soul, worn out as he was by the keen sufferings to which both had been exposed. It was an evergreen solitude, where crystal streams and waterfalls alone broke the great silence. From the hillside on which the monastery was built, there were picturesque views of the verdant slopes, with snow-clad heights in the distance; and it was easy enough to find a rocky cave, or a mossy nook, in which to hold uninterrupted converse with God.

Here our Saint found himself at last in his ideal earthly home; and the friars, whose father in Christ he became, found in him an ideal superior. They had originally formed the community of Peñuela, whence they had been forced to migrate on account of the insalubrity of the district. Many of them were advanced in years; the calm beauty of the landscape around their monastery had deepened the peace of their souls; and their one desire was to grow more detached from earth and more ready for heaven. With this end in view they had been allowed by their Prior, then in Rome, certain austere practices unsuited to their condition. With that loving kindness which characterised all his dealings with others, that intelligent sympathy which caused him to enter into the particular needs of those

he was called upon to direct, Saint John taught them a better way of obtaining their hearts' desire. Enlightened by his instructions and following his example, they gave to contemplation those hours which they had hitherto devoted to these penitential acts of supererogation. Out in the woods, alone with God and His angels, they emulated the worship of these pure spirits, and came back to the monastery as from a heavenly banquet.

Not seldom did it appear as though all other food would be lacking; but Providence never failed to send relief at the right time. Saint John would not permit them either to lay in supplies or to go through the neighbouring villages in quest of food. They obeyed without murmur, trusting in the wisdom and holiness of their superior, and with him seeking first the kingdom of God. One day when they came to the refectory, only to find the tables quite bare, they sat down cheerfully to listen to the homily which Saint John at once began to deliver. His burning words on the poverty of Jesus Christ, and the joy of being able sometimes to prove the reality of their desire to share it, made them forget their hunger. But our Lord did not forget it: while they were listening spell-bound to their superior's words, a benefactor was suddenly inspired to send them the necessary provisions. When the heavily laden horses stopped at the monastery gate, the hungry friars naturally uttered some fervent acts of thanksgiving; but Saint John, as the chronicler relates, had tears in his eyes at the thought of the lost opportunity of suffering for Christ.

During these tranquil months our Saint gave himself up to prayer and contemplation, to the direction of souls, and to the composition of his mystical works.

He kept in close touch with the Convent at Veas, going from time to time to converse with the Prioress or to give instructions to the nuns. A letter which he wrote to them, some six or seven years later, shows how strong was the supernatural tie which bound him to them:

"Jesus be in your souls! My daughters are thinking that I have lost sight of them because I do not write; and that I have ceased to consider how easily they can become saints, and rejoice in the Bridegroom whom they love, with great gladness and in strong security. I shall come to Veas and you shall see that I have not forgotten you. We shall then see the treasures obtained by pure love along the pathways of everlasting life; and the blessed progress you have made in Christ Whose brides are His joy and crown. This crown ought not to lie rotting on the ground; but rather to be borne by the seraphim and placed with respect and reverence on the head of our Lord.

"When the heart is grovelling meanly on the ground, the crown rolls in the dust and is trampled on in every act of meanness. But when, according to the words of David, 'Man shall come to a deep heart,' (Ps. lxiii. 7.), then God shall be exalted with the crown of the heart of His bride; wherewith they crown Him in the day of the joy of His coronation, for His delight is to be with the children of men.

"The sources of the waters of interior joy are not on the earth; the mouth of desire must be opened heavenwards, utterly empty. In order that the mouth of desire may be neither closed nor vitiated by the taste of anything, it should be kept perfectly empty and open before Him Who says: 'Dilate thy mouth and I will fill it' (Ps. lxxx. 11.). For so it is: he who seeks satis-

faction in anything is not keeping himself in a state of emptiness that God may fill him with this unspeakable joy; his hands are encumbered and he cannot lay hold of that which God is giving him; as he went to God so he returned. God preserve us from these miserable encumbrances, by which so sweet and delightful a freedom is hindered. Serve God, my daughters, beloved in Christ, following Him on the road of mortification, in all patience and all silence, with your soul bent on suffering, having made yourselves executioners of your own will. Mortify yourselves, and if there be anything still living that hinders the interior resurrection of the spirit, let it die in your souls. Amen."

Those of our readers, who by the grace of God have been enabled to catch a glimpse of our Saint's inner life, the gradual growth and perfecting of his soul; nowhere stated by him directly, but easily discernible from his outward bearing and his spiritual direction, will read between the lines of this letter the essence of his mystical doctrine. It was the literal interpretation of our Lord's words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." (St. Matt. xvi. 24). It may be summarised by the prayerful reading of the thirty-first chapter of the third book of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTIC AT THE HEAD OF THE COLLEGE AT BAEZA.

WHILE Saint John of the Cross was giving himself up to prayer and work in the delightful solitude of the Calvario, and finding an outlet for the zealous love of God which burned within him, by his conferences with his brethren and the nuns at Veas, Divine Providence was bringing about important and far-reaching changes in the Carmelite Order. The decision of the Nuncio, that the Discalced friars and nuns should live under obedience to the superiors of the Mitigation, and that both branches should be united by dwelling in the same monasteries, was the cause of much distress to all enlightened friends of the Reform. Among the most powerful of these was the Count de Tendilla who, failing to convince the Nuncio of the unfairness of his judgment, gave free vent to his indignation, and sought for justice at the hands of the King's Procurator. This minister succeeded in obtaining a decree of the Royal Council, suspending all action against the Reform until the case had been fully investigated and an unbiassed judgment pronounced. Upon this the Nuncio went to the King, complained bitterly of the interference and unseemly conduct of the count, and

set forth his own views which, prejudiced though they were, he sincerely believed correct.

Philip II. listened respectively to the Pope's representative; but he had a strong predilection for the work of Saint Teresa; and he could not see its threatened ruin without an effort to save it. He assured the Nuncio that no member of his court should, with impunity, insult his dignity or oppose his just regulations. He added a clause, however, which was not without its sting: "I know," he said, "what unbridled opposition the friars of the Mitigation have raised against the Reform. There is great reason to view their action with suspicion as ill-considered, seeing that it has been undertaken against persons who make profession of a life more austere and more perfect than their own. You will oblige me, Monsignor, by protecting true virtue, to which at present you are unfavourable, according to the judgment of those who complain that you have no liking for the Discalced Carmelites."

The Nuncio withdrew from the King's presence in a wiser, less self-confident mood than that in which he had entered it. He began to doubt the correctness of his own views; and when the count came to offer an ample apology for the heated language he had used he was cordially received. The mollified prelate assured him that he sincerely desired to see justice done, and that he would ask for the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into and definitely settle the whole business. This plan was carried into effect, and both the Nuncio and the commissioners came to the conclusion that the Mitigation had acted unwisely and unjustly; and that the only permanent remedy for the existing evil would be the erection of the Reform into a separate province of the Order. With commendable

prudence and moderation, it was thought advisable to soften the blow which this decision gave to the expectations of the Calced friars, by nominating, as superior of the Reform, Father Angel de Salzar who, though against its establishment as a separate province, had always been a sincere friend and admirer of Saint Teresa. The first use he made of his authority was to set the revered Foundress at liberty to come and go among her convents according to their needs. Moreover, he chose as his assistant Father Jerome Gracian, so that, as far as Spain was concerned, peace was restored to the Order. It only remained for Rome to set its seal upon the decision that had been taken in the cradle of the Reform. In the course of the following year that seal was granted.

One immediate result of the changed attitude of the Nuncio was a demand for new foundations of Discalced friars. The first agreed upon was at Baeza. This notable city was not far from Peñuela, whose community, as we have seen, had migrated to a more favourable site. But the people had so greatly regretted their departure, and had so earnestly besought their return, that a new community had been installed there under improved conditions. So edifying was their life, so great their influence for good, that the inhabitants of Baeza determined to secure a house of the Reform for their own city, the reputed birthplace of Saint Ursula, and even in ancient times famous throughout Southern Europe. Its celebrity was due in great measure to its admirable situation in the most salubrious and fruitful part of the plain of Andalusia. In recent years it had suffered loss from internal dissensions caused by the bitter enmity which had arisen between two powerful rival families. It had seen its peace and prestige re-

stored through the heroic life labours of the Apostle of Andalusia, Blessed John of Avila, to whom it owed the foundation of its great university. It was ten years since his death when Father John of the Cross came to the city to enter into his labours and share his renown with regard to it.

Father Angel de Salazar had willingly acceded to the request of the notables of Baeza for a monastery of Discalced Carmelites; and considering the facilities offered by their university, had decided to open a house of studies for the friars, with the holy and learned John of the Cross at its head. Towards midnight, on the Eve of Trinity Sunday, 1579, the Saint led the band of friars, selected from the communities of Mount Calvary and Peñuela, into the dwelling secured for them by the generosity of a zealous priest. The night was spent in fitting up a large room as a chapel. At daybreak the little bell of the monastery rang out its summons; and among those who answered its first call came three well known doctors of the university who had been among the most earnest and influential petitioners for the new foundation. They had discovered the treasure hidden in the Calvario, where their intercourse with its saintly Prior had awakened in their hearts a desire to see him connected with their university. On his part he could not be indifferent to their project of establishing a college of his Order at Baeza; for he realised that, if learning without faith is at best a vain possession, joined to faith, it may be made a valuable auxiliary in extending the Kingdom of Christ. So he left behind, at the call of obedience, the solitude and leisure for contemplation he so greatly appreciated, and gave himself up wholeheartedly to his new duties. He organised the teaching in his college on the lines of his experiences during his

own student-days at Medina and Salamanca. Theology was supported by the philosophy of the Schools. There were debates and discussions over which he presided, sometimes joining issue with one or other side, and easily convincing his hearers of the keenness of his intellect and the depth of his erudition. Moreover, he drew around him the more spiritually minded, not only of the university, but of the ordinary citizens. His mere presence seemed to purify and elevate the mental atmosphere of his surroundings. He made himself all to all that he might gain all to Christ; but he carried about with him everywhere that interior solitude into which he could at any moment withdraw.

Thus was founded a college, like that of Alcala de Henares some nine years previously, where the young students, under the guidance of their saintly rector, grew daily in grace and knowledge. A visitor sent some mattresses for their use; but Saint John returned them with a courteous message to the effect that, when in health, the Discalced friars sleep upon boards, and that there were at the time no invalids in the house. From this and similar circumstances, the rumour went round the city that the Carmelite friars were living the lives of saints; and their reputation attracted to their church and their confessionals many of the noblest and most learned, as well as the poorest and most ignorant, of the people around them.

In the year 1580, a violent epidemic, not unlike the influenza of our own days, swept over Europe. Its characteristic features were a painful and incessant cough and a burning fever. The infection spread with frightful rapidity, especially in Spain; and the friars were not immune from the scourge. There were numerous victims among them, both at Baeza and

Peñuela. At the latter place the distress was very great, for it was farther removed from the centres of relief, in desert-like surroundings. Saint John, whose tender charity knew no bounds, caused all the sick friars there to be brought to Baeza which soon bore the appearance of an hospital. Did our Saint, as he passed among his brethren, ministering with skill and affection to both their temporal and spiritual needs, recall his early apprenticeship in the hospital at Medina? It was there he had learned what he was now putting in practice—how to look upon disease and death without fear, and also how to communicate his own faith and courage to others.

There was need enough at this time of the mattresses and other comforts that he had refused to accept when the house was founded; and some of the friars asked for permission to go and beg for such alms; but the Saint remained inflexible on this point. He was unwilling either to let the rule be broken, or to allow the citizens to be asked for the relief of which they, themselves, stood so greatly in need. "Instead of going into the streets," he said, "let us go to the chapel;" and leading the way thither, he remained long in ardent and trustful prayer. He was not confounded in his hope. The angels, always sweet and strong messengers, did not fail to make the good people of Baeza aware of the almost utter destitution and need of the friars. They admired the self-abnegation and reliance upon God's unfailing Providence that withheld them from begging in the city; and they hastened to the monastery with all that was needed.

In the midst of these toils and afflictions, the love of God and his brethren kept the soul of Saint John in peace. Nevertheless, grace as well as nature were

calling him back to an obscure life and to old Castile, the land of Saint Teresa, who like himself had no love for Andalusia, where as she states in the account of her foundation at Seville, she had repeatedly refused to establish her convents. In a letter written by Saint John from Baeza to Mother Catherine of Jesus he says:

"Jesus be in your soul, my daughter Catherine! Although I know not where you are, I write you these few lines, trusting that our Mother will forward them to you, if you are not with her. Even if you are not with her, comfort yourself with me, who am farther away and alone here. For since I was swallowed by that whale (the prison in the monastery of Toledo) and cast forth upon this distant shore, I have not been counted worthy to see her or the saints who are down there. God has done it for our good; for loneliness is a file, and to suffer darkness is the way to great light."

Between these lines we may discern that longing for sympathetic companionship in Christ, which like his divine Master, our Saint did not disdain to make known. But he was entering deeper and deeper into the Heart of God; and finding in the Sacred Humanity of Jesus an unfailing force of consolation. His intense faith and love found ever new delight in the contemplation of the Incarnation, the Mass, and the other great mysteries of our religion; and it was in vain that he strove to conceal the supernatural favours bestowed on him.

One Christmastide, while conversing with his brethren on the wonderful goodness and condescension of the Word made flesh, he became so enraptured that, clasping in his arms an image of the Divine Child Jesus, he began, after the Spanish fashion, to execute a rhythmic dance to accompany the words he sang:

"Mi dulce y tierne Jesus !
Si amores me han de matar,
Ahora tienen lugar."

(My sweet and tender Jesus
If love must take away my life,
The hour has now arrived).

On such occasions the passionate love for Jesus which burned within him, made itself felt on all around him ; and those who, at certain times, were privileged to behold the halo of light encircling his head, could almost share his rapture.

It was at Christmastide also, that his special talent for organising feasts and providing suitable mystery plays, came into evidence. On Christmas Eve a cave was constructed in the Church with the ox, and the ass, and all the details with which Spanish devotion fills in the picture, but without the central figures. A procession then took place through the cloisters of the monastery. Our Lady's image was carried by the friars, one of whom, representing Saint Joseph, made urgent appeals for hospitality from those who played the part of innkeepers. The dialogues were composed by Saint John who, as the procession entered the church, began his discourse on the Nativity. All then gathered round the cave in which the statue of our Lady was placed ; and the remainder of the story was told in the Office of Midnight when the Holy Child appeared in the crib, and on the following day when the shepherds came to adore.

Thus was the liturgy of the Church woven into the minds of the community ; and devotion to the Holy Child, so essential a feature of the Carmelite vocation, kept alive in the hearts of the students at Baeza by the great mystical doctor whose teaching was as simple as it was sublime. His Mass had become so wonder-

ful a transport of love as to entail an almost daily ecstasy. One day after receiving the Precious Blood, he remained motionless with the chalice in his hands, unable to go on with the Mass. He quitted the altar like one in a trance, seeking the solitude of the sacristy to entertain his divine Guest. Whereupon a woman, well known for her holiness and almsgiving, said aloud: "Call the angels, who alone can finish this Mass with the devotion of the saintly man who is at present unable to do so." But his brethren gently brought him back to the altar, where they helped him to complete the Holy Sacrifice.

It was not only during Mass that "The Splendour of the Father" vouchsafed so to shine upon our Saint as to be reflected by him to the worshippers around. It was frequently remarked that his face shone with unearthly brightness, and that his words were accompanied by a supernatural heat which, without making any impression on the senses, penetrated to the deepest recesses of the heart, there to enkindle the fire of divine love. This was especially the case when he was preaching on the Blessed Sacrament or celebrating the feast of Corpus Christi. During Passiontide, his ecstasies arose from the grief which filled his soul and transfigured his countenance. His sighs, and his ardent pleading with the divine Mercy on behalf of sinful men, were such as to move all hearts to compunction. His devotion to the Immaculate and Blessed Virgin Mary was the outcome of his vivid realisation of the place she held in the divine scheme of the Incarnation and Redemption. Like Father Faber, he would put himself the question:

> "How can I rightly love thy Son,
> Sweet Mother, if I love not thee?"

He never forgot his own sonship bestowed on him from the Cross; he kept constantly in mind all that he owed to his Mother Mary; and he never slackened in his loving service and thanksgiving.

At Baeza, as at the Calvario and at Veas, he often said the Votive Mass of the Blessed Trinity. Asked why he did so, he replied simply, "Because there is no one more holy in heaven;" but to one of the nuns who was herself most devout to this sublime mystery, he cried: "O my daughter, how great is the good we shall taste, how great the glory we shall enjoy in presence of these three divine Persons!" Later on he said to the nuns at Granada: "In such wise does God communicate to this sinner the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, that if His Divine Majesty did not strengthen my weakness with special help from heaven, it would be impossible to live."

The light with which, at this period, God inundated the soul of his chosen and faithful servant was such, that it enabled him to read the secrets of the hearts of his penitents. One of these related that, while she was preparing for confession, the idea occurred to her that her director could not be so learned as men said, for his words and his ways were too simple. As she was about to begin her confession he said to her, "My child, it is true that I am a sinner, but I am not an ignorant man." We can imagine her surprise and confusion. His discernment in the matter of vocations was unerring. A novice at Baeza showed such piety and fervour that the community began to expect great things from him in the future. Not so St. John, who foresaw the abandonment of his vocation, which actually came to pass on the eve of his profession.

What marvel was it that the virtues practised at Baeza shed new lustre on the Reform? Among his

other gifts, the Prior had received a special facility for uniting the hearts of his subjects in God and for God. There was not a happier community in Spain, or even in the whole world. Yet the secret of their happiness lay in the perfect detachment practised and inculcated by Saint John. Not only did he live at Baeza as joyously and contentedly as though he were in the dear solitude of Mount Calvary, or in one of the still dearer monasteries of Castile; but he emptied his mind and heart of all that might afford mere human consolation. One of his biographers asserts that it was at this time that he made the sacrifice so greatly to be regretted by all who desire to know the saints as they knew each other, that of destroying his correspondence with Saint Teresa.

But his complete personal detachment from the pleasures and honours of this world did not prevent his procuring for others the consolations they might legitimately expect from his hands. At Duruelo we have at his side his mother and his brother, both capable of appreciating the loftiness of his aims, both aiding him in the practice of poverty, and the firm foundation of that first house of the friars of the Reform. Again at Baeza we find those dear and saintly partakers of his heroic sacrifices. They had heard of his imprisonment, of his miraculous escape, and of his renown in Andalusia; and they came to see him and stay near him for a while. How cordially he welcomed them! With what simplicity he made them known to his friends! The nearer he drew to God, the larger and more tender his heart became; and his affectionate regard for his mother and brother was but a manifestation of his love for God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REFORM A SEPARATE PROVINCE.

THE decision of the Nuncio and the King's commissioners that the Reform should be erected into a separate province of the Carmelite Order, gave to Philip II. entire satisfaction. He lost no time in making it known to all concerned; and he instructed his ambassador in Rome to use every means in his power to secure the approbation of the Holy See. Two friars were chosen by Saint Teresa herself, to lay the case before the Pope; but it seemed at first doubtful whether or not they would be able to reach Rome. They had no funds for the undertaking; moreover their journey was not unlikely to be hindered by those friars of the Mitigation who still hoped to effect a compromise, and keep the houses of the Reform in the existing provinces. It was at this time that the greatness of soul, and the exceptional capacity for business matters, possessed by the Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus, came into prominence.

Having first obtained the opinion of eminent theologians that, under the circumstances, it would be lawful and advisable for the two Discalced friars to lay aside their habit during their journey and stay in Rome, she invited them to Veas, where she gave them most helpful instructions for the success of their enterprise, adding

the substantial gift of 400 ducats, the dowry of one of her novices. She had also obtained contributions from other convents; and was thus able to provide the travellers with all that was necessary. Saint Teresa was in admiration at her zeal and resourcefulness. "Anne does the work," she said, "while I have the name. They call me Foundress; but it is to her that the title should be given;" and the large-hearted saint wrote in the fulness of her grateful affection: "My Daughter and my Crown! I never tire of thanking God for the favour He granted me in drawing you to us;" and she went on to praise the works which Anne had done, and the gracious and able manner in which she had carried them out, adding that it was easily seen that it was God Himself who acted by her.

The delegates managed to reach Rome without their business having been discovered: they were taken for envoys of one of the grandees of Spain who was known to be seeking a dispensation with regard to his marriage. They had brought with them letters of recommendation obtained by Saint Teresa from King Philip, and important documents relating to the cause which she herself had drawn up. The Pope referred them to the Sacred Congregation of Regulars, among whom was the holy and enlightened Cardinal Montalto, afterwards Pope Sixtus V. He at once grasped the situation, and by his powerful arguments convinced the other cardinals, not only of the advisibility but of the absolute necessity of the petition brought by the two friars.

The Holy Father, however, wished to have the opinion of the general chapter of the Carmelite Order then sitting. Its members, hesitating to oppose a project supported by both the Papal Nuncio and King of Spain, left the matter entirely in the hands of their

newly elected Prior General John Baptist Caffardo. He was a man of peace, and thought to conciliate both parties by suggesting that the Reform should indeed be elected into a separate province, but that it should be governed by provincials chosen alternately from the Calced and the Discalced friars.

Nothing could have been more likely to bring about new dissensions; and the two delegates regarded theirs as a lost cause, when they were advised to seek the intervention of the Cardinal Protector of Spain who had considerable influence. He represented to the Pope that, since there was not perfect agreement between the proposals of the General and those of the Sacred Congregation, it would be proper for the Holy Father himself to settle the question definitely in a consistory, thus preventing any further discussion or dissatisfaction. Gregory XIII. acted on this advice; and when he had heard the report of the Sacred Congregation, and the conclusions of the Carmelite Chapter and of the General, he gave judgment in favour of a separate province for the Reform, to be governed by a Provincial chosen by their own votes from among the Discalced friars.

The Brief was issued towards the end of June 1580. It was put into execution on March 4th. 1581, when a Provincial Chapter of all the superiors of the Reform was held at Alcala de Henares. Father Gracian was then elected as Provincial, but only by a majority of one. Father John of the Cross was chosen as one of the definitors. On the following day, Sunday March 5th, a public procession of thanksgiving took place by order of the King. The governor of the city with the most distinguished citizens, the rector and professors of the university, all joined in the triumphal march to the church of the Discalced Carmelites, when they

accompanied the friars to the principal church of Alcala where Mass was solemnized.

Great was the joy of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross at this final seal set upon their work by Church and State. Saint Teresa wrote: "God alone knew all the bitterness, as He alone knows the immense joy that fills my soul at seeing the termination of all these troubles . . . Now we are all at peace, Discalced and Mitigated. Let us hasten then, my brothers and sisters, to devote ourselves to the honour of His Divine Majesty Who has so mercifully hearkened to our prayers." In his letter to her after the Chapter, Saint John reminded her of the promise she had made, to procure his return to Castile, as soon as the separate province they both so ardently desired and prayed for, should have become an accomplished fact. His term of office at Baeza was nearing its close, and he feared his election as prior. Moreover he could not but wish always to be nearer the Cradle of the Reform.

Saint Teresa had already written to Father Gracian: "I forgot to beg one thing of your Paternity for my Easter cake. I promised Father John of the Cross that, whenever God should permit us to form a province for ourselves, I should ask for his return to Castile. He claims the fulfilment of that promise, for he fears being chosen Prior at Baeza." The "Easter cake," however, was not forthcoming; and Saint John went back to his post. Divine Providence had need of him in Andalusia as a model for superiors there, and as the unique teacher by word and example of the contemplative life.

During his absence a lay brother at Baeza had fallen ill and had been sent to the hospital. Saint John knew that he was not likely to receive there all the care he needed; so he had him brought back to the monastery

and nursed with all the skill and tenderness possible. Other instances of the wonderful blend in him of a great mind with a good heart, the most complete personal detachment from creatures with the most affectionate consideration for their needs, and the utmost compassion for their weaknesses and failings, were soon spread abroad; and there was not a house of the Reform but would gladly have welcomed him as Prior. This favour was reserved for the monastery of Los Martires, Granada, originally the Hermitage of the Holy Martyrs founded in 1575.

The spot was remarkably alike for its hallowed memories and its wonderful beauty. During the Moorish persecutions hundreds of Christians had there given their lives for the faith, and left a store of hidden graces for succeeding generations to obtain by their intercession. From the hill on which the monastery stood, could be seen the beautiful gardens and orchards of the neighbouring city, the grassy plain dotted with villages, the lovely banks of the winding Genil with its many tributary waters, and to crown all, the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada. The monastery itself was the abode of peace and fervour. Its Prior, Father Augustine of the Kings, had been one of Saint John's own novices at Pastrana; he had faithfully followed in the footsteps of his former novice-master; and he rejoiced exceedingly to give place to him, and once more to live under his direction.

For Saint John it was a solace to find in Andalusia such congenial surroundings. He was always happy to be where the wonders of creation could speak directly to the heart of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator; and it was a relief to be able to pour out for others the waters of truth and love which inundated his soul.

Besides his own community there were the nuns at Veas, to whom, by visits and letters, he still gave spiritual counsel and consolation. At Los Martires, then, as at the Calvario, he lived his mystical life in simplicity and peace; reading, writing, praying, in silence and solitude; never refusing to share his gifts, but preferring immediate converse with God to all other occupations.

The newly constituted province of the Reform was so extensive that its Provincial, Father Gracian, found it advisable to appoint three Vicars Provincial: Father Anthony of Jesus for Old Castile, Father Nicholas (Doria) for New Castile, and Father Diego of the Trinity for Andalusia. When Father Diego arrived at Los Martires to make his visitation, the only fault he had to find was that the Prior kept himself too much aloof from the friends and benefactors of the monastery. Acting on his advice, our Saint, taking one of his community as companion, set out to visit the Archbishop of Granada and the President of the Chancery. He called first upon the President whose house stood on the road to that of the Archbishop. Saluting him with respect the humble friar apologized for having delayed his visit of courtesy, assuring the President that he had not failed to recommend him to God in the solitude of his monastery. "Know, Father," was the reply, "that we are more edified to see you in your own houses than in ours. Your seclusion obliges us to help you more than your visits; for we then know that you are keeping the place God has given you in His church. The less we see of you, the more we think of you."

Delighted with this reception, so entirely after his own way of thinking, the Saint took leave of the President and returned to the monastery without calling

on the Archbishop. On the way back he remarked to his companion: "Would that all the Discalced friars could have heard what the President has just said to us. Since we have been commanded to remain day and night, in or near our cells, to meditate on the law of the Lord, He will provide for our needs." He related to his community what had taken place during his visit, adding: "My Fathers, you could not have more reliable testimony as to what the world wants from us. We are not expected to be courtiers but saints; and this, not in their houses, but in our own, constantly praying to God on their behalf." Nevertheless, he would not have his brethren make their rule of silence and solitude an excuse for neglecting the spiritual needs of their penitents, or benefactors, or of any who claimed their assistance. "Confessors and directors," he used to say, "should be like the sun, which shines upon the earth to make it fruitful, without being injured by the noxious vapours which may arise therefrom.

While the Vicar Provincial was noting, with much gratification, the esteem in which the friars were held at Granada, he received a request from the notables of that city for a convent of nuns. He welcomed the idea cordially; and in the October of that year, 1581, he took with him to Veas, Father John of the Cross, who was still the director of Anne of Jesus, that they might lay the proposal before the venerable Mother. She was at first averse from the project, but when, with the community, she had besought our Lord to make known His Will, He told her that she would have much to suffer, but that He would be greatly glorified in the new convent. She at once informed her directors of the revelation she had received; that very day the foundation was agreed upon, the Provincial was applied to for

permission to make it, and Father John of the Cross was deputed to go in person to ask Saint Teresa to come, and bring with her four nuns from Avila.

We can well imagine his readiness to undertake the journey. He had not met the Saint since he had been taken prisoner at the Convent of the Incarnation; and he looked forward to the joy of conversing with her once again of the things of God in that little house of Saint Joseph's so dear to them both, as well as to the happiness of having her for a while in Granada. It was not to be. He had, indeed, the ineffable consolation of talking with the Saint in her beloved convent at Avila; but she soon convinced him that it was not part of the divine plan for her to go to Granada. She was needed at Burgos; moreover, she wished to see Anne of Jesus acting as Foundress during her own lifetime. She was then in her sixty-seventh year. Did she confide to her first friar that she knew it to be the last year of her life? We cannot tell; but of this we are certain, that they took leave of one another as Saints always do, in Christ our Lord; so that neither time nor distance, not even death itself, could really separate them. She could not spare four nuns for the foundation; but she sent two from Avila, commissioning Father John of the Cross to take a third from Toledo.

The party arrived at Veas on December the eighth, 1581; and in January, 1582, the foundation at Granada was begun. It was not completed without much anxiety and the endurance of actual poverty and hardship; but Father John of the Cross was near to sustain the courage and confidence of the nuns; and Saint Tesesa was watching over the convent from a distance. On the thirtieth of May, only about four months before her death, she wrote a memorable letter to the Prioress,

which gives us to understand that Anne of Jesus had some of the defects of her great qualities, and that her Mother in Christ was careful to point them out. It seems that more nuns had been brought to Granada than the city was able or willing to support; also that the Provincial had not been informed of the special difficulties of the foundation. Saint Teresa insists that the nuns from Veas, whose attachment to the Prioress she considers inordinate, shall be sent back to their convent; and she comments severely on the undue importance attached to certain trivial circumstances such as the form of address used by the Provincial.

"What does it matter," she writes, "whether the Father Provincial styles you president, or prioress, or calls you by your name, Anne of Jesus? . . . I assure you I am quite grieved to see the Discalced Carmelites so soon become attached to such mean trifles, and that they make them the subject of conversation; above all, that Mother Mary of Christ (a very holy religious whom the saint had sent from Avila to be sub-prioress) should take any notice of such things. This seems so strange to me that I believe that, either her imperfections have affected her head, or the devil has been using all his art to introduce diabolical principles into the Order . . . . Your Reverence is praised for being very courageous; as if submission would take away your courage! May God give my Discalced daughters the grace to be humble, obedient and submissive; for courage without these virtues is nothing but the source of numerous imperfections . . . Give this letter to the Mother Sub-prioress, and let it be read by her and her two companions, and by Father John of the Cross."

Anne of Jesus was truly a great soul, or she would scarcely have left to posterity a letter which so unre-

servedly proclaimed her shortcomings, especially as St. Teresa was at Burgos and practically cut off from correspondence with Granada. Several letters must have miscarried, with the result that she was completely misinformed. The letter we have quoted was probably based on a most defective knowledge of the facts; and consequently unjust to Anne of Jesus. But the saints understand one another; and the Prioress of Granada was only too willing that Saint Teresa's censures on her manner of making the foundation should serve as a lesson to all succeeding generations of Carmelites.

We may wonder at the Saint's not sending some material help to Granada; but there was at that time great dearth of resources throughout the Reform. We may learn this from a letter of Saint Teresa's to the Provincial dated November 29th, 1581, the day on which her two nuns left Avila:—"Father John of the Cross wished very much to send you some money," she writes, "but he was not able to do so . . . Antonio Reiz has given me four scudi for you. I am waiting for an opportunity to forward them. It is all I can do not to keep them for myself; for as matters are at present, I should not be surprised if I were tempted to steal!" There were worse temptations than poverty, however, to try the dear Saint's faithful and tender heart. There were internal dissensions among the friars of the Reform, which cast some dark shadows over her last days on earth.

History, whether of Church or State, furnishes us with instances of the evils that may arise in any organisation, when the second in command possesses greater aptitude for affairs than the first. It also supplies examples of the good that may result from such a combination, when the strong second, with perfect abnegation, knows how to support, without supplanting the weaker first. It

will be remembered that Saint Teresa had always wished to see Father Jerome Gracian at the head of the Reform. His genius, his winning courtesy, his piety and zeal, all seemed to mark him out for the post. But he lacked some of the qualities of a great leader: steadfastness in the face of unrighteous opposition, indifference to praise or blame when acting conscientiously, and the faculty of making the best possible use of his assistants. Saint Teresa was not unaware of these deficiencies; but she had looked to the appointment of Father Nicholas Doria as first definitor, to make them good. He had been but four years in the Order; but his previous experiences, his extraordinary capacity for business, his sturdy independence of character, and his unquestionable fervour and devotedness to the Reform, would, she thought, supply the necessary element of strength to Father Gracian's government. She had not reckoned upon the unexpected developments in character and conduct, often brought about by elevation to a post of honour and authority.

Father Nicholas Doria soon showed himself likely to be, not the supporter, but the supplanter, of Father Jerome Gracian. He watched his movements with a critical eye; he listened to the murmurs and complaints of imperfect religious; he made invidious comparisions between his own and his superior's way of judging and acting; and he went so far as publicly to censure his conduct. Saint Teresa was to be spared the agony of witnessing the climax of the misunderstandings and conflicts of opinion between the two. In heaven she would be able to realise how, in spite of Father Jerome's weaknesses, and of the harshness, occasionally amounting to positive unkindness, on the part of Father Nicholas, "all should be well."

She was at Valladolid on her way back to Avila from her last foundation at Burgos when she wrote to her Provincial a most respectful and tender letter of warning. The complaints that had reached her ear concerning him were, she knew, the result of envy; still she would have him act with circumspection, for she could not bear to think of these accusations, unfounded though they were, being brought against him at the forthcoming Chapter. That letter was written on September 1st, 1582. On the 29th of that month she lay on her death-bed at Alba de Tormes; and on October 4th (old style) she passed away in an ecstasy of love.

At that moment the Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus herself seriously ill at Granada, had a vision of the Saint which she recounted to her confessor, Father John of the Cross. He had been prepared for the news; for Saint Teresa had doubtless confided to him as her director the revelation she had had, that her death was to take place in the course of that year. Better than anyone else on earth, her first friar and coadjutor could realise the joy and glory into which she had entered. Henceforth he knew he could with perfect confidence rely on her guidance and support, in the struggle to keep unchanged the spirit she had bequeathed to the Reform; so he set himself with renewed ardour "to endure the Cross despising the shame."

CHAPTER XII.

THE VICAR PROVINCIAL OF ANDALUSIA.

In the spring of the year 1583 Father Jerome Gracian convoked a Chapter of the Reform at Almodovar. Father Nicholas Doria had returned from a mission to Rome, where he had given a full account of the condition of the new province. He was keener than ever in his desire to see the reins of government tightly held; and he did not hesitate to repeat his criticisms on the facility with which dispensations from the primitive rule were granted.

Among the other priors present was Father John of the Cross, whose well known sanctity and intimate relations with Saint Teresa should have given great weight to his opinions. His earnest desire was to strengthen the contemplative side of the constitutions. He feared lest the frequent coming and going, necessitated by sermons and conferences undertaken by the friars, should lead to relaxation of the solitude, prayer and penance essential to the Carmelite vocation. When it was proposed that the priors should be elected by the province and not by each monastery separately, he wished it to be enacted that no religious should be appointed superior twice in succession. He was also opposed to the undertaking of foreign missions: for he considered that there were religious orders enough in

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the Church with that special end, whereas the Carmelite friars were intended, not to preach the gospel to pagan lands, but to promulgate its perfect practice in the home countries, by their example, their prayers, and their teaching.

His voice did not then prevail upon any of these points; and all that was left for him to do was privately to impress upon the Provincial not to grant dispensations so easily, not to listen so credulously to accounts of visions and revelations. We have already seen how careful and enlightened he himself was in the discernment of spirits; and how little store he set by apparently miraculous favours when unaccompanied by proofs of solid virtue. Father Gracian listened to him with the respect due to his position in the Order; but his easy-going temperament, and the fascination which the external ministry had always possessed for him, prevented his following the advice whose wisdom he could not but recognise.

After the Chapter, Father John of the Cross went back to Granada as Prior for the second time, to the great joy of his community. The following year, 1584, was again a year of famine and sore distress throughout Spain, but especially in Andalusia; and our Saint again gave proof of his tender compassion and resourceful charity. Not only did he employ as many men as possible on the buildings of the monastery but he gave orders that no one who came to ask an alms should be allowed to go away empty handed. Nor could he doubt but that God miraculously multiplied the means at his disposal; for in spite of his lavish almsgiving, rather perhaps because of it, there never was any lack of food in the monastery all through the famine.

At the close of the year he was deputed by the

Provincial to preside over the foundation of a convent at Malaga. When the order reached him he was attending one of the nuns in Granada then on her death-bed. He consulted our Lord interiorly as to how he should act. He administered the Last Sacraments, then, repeating aloud the words of Our Lord "They shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover," (St. Mark xvi, 18), he laid his hands upon the head of the dying religious who was immediately cured. Next day he set out for Malaga with Mother Mary of Christ as Prioress, several other nuns from Granada and as many more from Veas. On the way Mother Mary of Christ met with so grievous a fall that she was thought to be dead. Again Father John of the Cross was seen to possess the gift of healing. He laid his hand on the wound in her head from which the blood was streaming ; it ceased to flow and she continued her journey as though no accident had happened. The convent was founded on February 17th, 1585, when Saint John said the first Mass. The nuns had only the barest necessaries of life ; but such was the courage implanted in their hearts by the teaching and example of their holy director, that they rejoiced in the rigours of their poverty. Very soon they were rewarded by the abundant alms poured into the convent and the number and excellence of the postulants who came to it.

In the May following, a Chapter was convened at the monastery of Saint Philip in Lisbon for the election of a successor to the retiring Provincial, Father Jerome Gracian. Father Anthony of Jesus was excused from attending on account of his advanced age. Father Nicholas Doria was also absent, founding a house of the Reform in his native city of Genoa. The minds of all present turned to Father John of the Cross as the

Provincial of their choice. His sanctity and learning, his knowledge of and attachment to the principles on which Saint Teresa had based the Reform; above all, his tender charity and his manifest power with God gave him an unquestioned pre-eminence in that assembly. When he realised the determination of his brethren to give him the first place he besought them earnestly to pray for light to make another choice. He pleaded his personal unfitness for the office; and he pointed out the unquestionable talents for organisation and administration possessed by Father Nicholas Doria.

The result was that the latter was finally elected; the capitulars sang the Te Deum, and deputed two of this number to convey the news to Father Nicholas at Genoa. He at once returned to Spain and convoked a Chapter at Pastrana. Expressing his sense of the difficulties he was likely to encounter in the administration of the Reform, whose houses were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Peninsula, he began by sub-dividing the Province into four sections—Portugal, the two Castiles, and Andalusia—with a Vicar-provincial at the head of each. Father John of the Cross left the Chapter as Prior of Granada and Vicar-provincial of Andalusia; so that he found himself, instead of being, as he had hoped, set free from the responsibility of any office of authority, charged with the supervision of thirteen homes of the Reform, seven of friars and six of nuns. During his return journey, while traversing a hilly and dangerous region, he was thrown from the ass on which he rode down a steep incline towards a precipice at its foot. Suddenly a hand was held out to him, holding a piece of white cloth which he seized, and by which he was drawn back to safety. At the same moment Mother Anne of Jesus, who was praying for

him in her convent at Granada, entered into a trance when she beheld his danger. When they met she asked him what had happened on that day and at that hour. He told her of the miraculous help he had received, adding: "So it was you, Mother, who came to my assistance."

Saint John lost no time in beginning the visitation of the homes confided to his care. Obliged by the state to which his body had been reduced by his austerities to ride upon an ass or a mule, he took every opportunity of dismounting to pray for a while in some solitary place, where he would immediately be wholly absorbed in God. On one such occasion the friar who accompanied him saw him raised in ecstasy above the ground. Filled with awe, he did not venture to interrupt the prayer of the Saint, until forced to do so by the approach of night. Thus the journeys of the man of God did not interfere with his contemplation. On the contrary they were times of more complete separation from creatures and union with the Creator than would often be secured in the monastery where, as Prior, he was subject to many interruptions.

As soon as he reached the house to be visited, he went first to the Church to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and to beg the divine Master Himself to make the visitation. He then paid a visit to any invalids in the monastery, inquiring minutely into their state of mind and body. If he found them in need of some particular remedy, or comfort, he would order it to be procured at any cost; for he held that poverty was no excuse for leaving the sick or aged without whatever might alleviate their pain, or add to their comfort. He went through every part of the house, treating everyone whom he met with that simple courtesy which won all

hearts, and made it impossible for anyone to wish that things should be otherwise than as he suggested. If he discovered any departure from the rule, whether for the sake of greater austerity, or of greater ease, he would point it out, quoting the words of Saint Teresa: "If those who have gone before us acquired perfection and the name of saints, by walking along this path beaten out of old by our fathers, it would be a mistake to seek and follow any other." No one was more convinced than he of the truth of the saying of Saint Dionysius: "Omnium Divinorum Divinissimum est cöoperari in salutem animarum," (The most divine of all divine things is to work with God towards the saving of souls). But he also held it to be true that "an instant of pure love is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul (in the state of union), and more profitable to Holy Church than all other good works together, though it may seem as if nothing were done," (Spiritual Canticle XXVIII., Note); and that "love is the most precious of all things because it is the 'bond of perfection' as the Apostle saith, and perfection is union with God," (S.C. XXX., Note). Therefore he wished to set limits to the external works undertaken by the friars. He insisted, gently but firmly, that their first duty was the keeping of their rule, adding: "He who interrupts the courses of his spiritual exercises and prayer is like one who allows a bird to escape; he cannot catch it again easily."

On arriving at one of the monasteries the saint suddenly became very ill. The doctor, who was hastily summoned, declared that there was no hope of recovery; but when told of his danger, the sick man said simply: "I shall not die of this illness. The stone is not sufficiently polished to be placed in the house of God."

His words proved to be truly prophetic; and he was soon able to resume his journeys. On one occasion he arrived at the bank of a river which he expected to cross by a ford. Heavy rains, however, had swollen the stream to such an extent that this seemed impossible. At first he thought of seeking a safer place of crossing where the river was shallower, but he felt himself urged to direct his companion to take that precaution, while he himself dashed straight into the rushing waters. The hoofs of the animal upon which he rode became entangled in the branches of the trees swept along by the torrent; and the Saint saw himself in mid-stream without other resources than prayer. He called upon Our Lady to help him, and straightway found himself on the opposite bank. He rode direct to the hostelry where he discovered the cause of his having been interiorly moved to cross the river at that dangerous spot. A quarrel had taken place between the son of the inn-keeper and another man who, in consequence, had been mortally wounded. He proved to be a religious of another Order who had abandoned his vocation. Saint John remained with him for two hours, at the end of which he died, full of compunction and of hope.

About this time was made the foundation of Segovia. One of his penitents Dona Ana de Penalosa, widow of Don Juan de Guevara, who by his will left it open to her to found in Segovia either an hospital for the poor or a monastery for Discalced friars, opined for the latter. Saint John agreed, provided that she would at the same time establish a fund for the relief of the sick poor, thus carrying out both the desires of her husband. He obtained from the Provincial, Father Nicholas Doria, permission for the foundation to be made by the Vicar-

provincial of Old Castile where Segovia was situated, while he himself went on to visit the two houses of the Reform in Seville. In that of the nuns he found many inconveniences resulting from the unsuitability of their dwelling. He managed to secure another to which they were transferred in June, 1586.

In the previous month a monastery had been begun at Cordova, whose delightful situation had strongly appealed to Saint John during his first travels in Andalusia; for the city stands in the midst of a wide open space, with the Guadalquiver flowing proudly by, and, within view, lofty mountains whose lower slopes were covered with roses. When he had finished the visitation at Seville he went back to Cordova to watch over the completion of the monastery there. The workmen were preparing the site of the church; and one day while Saint John was in his cell a wall which they were demolishing suddenly fell right on top of it. Everyone expected to find him crushed beneath the debris; but when it had been cleared away he was found alive and unhurt. The stones had arranged themselves so as to form a protecting arch above him; and when those who beheld the wonder eagerly questioned him concerning it he replied: "She of the white mantle covered me with it."

One result of this miracle was the application made by many to be received into the monastery. The saint chose nine of the applicants, keeping the two poorest at Cordova, in order that, as he remarked, the foundation there might be more secure. The seven others he sent to Seville under the care of a lay brother, Martin of the Assumption, without either money or provisions for the journey, and only one sorry mule to carry their clothes. The brother, although not unaccustomed to such trials

of faith and obedience, was somewhat alarmed at the prospect; but his Prior bade him have no fears since our Lord had made everything ready for the travellers. Such proved to be the case; for abundant alms rendered the journey easy and pleasant; and left the good brother with a large sum in hand. He brought this to the Prior who, telling him to give it to the procurator, added: "I had rather you had returned a greater saint, after suffering hardship and injuries for the love of God Who has provided for you so well."

Some years before this, when Saint John was at Baeza, he had heard an interior voice saying that it was God's will that a house of Discalced friars should be founded in Caravaca, where His Divine Majesty should be greatly served. This spot had become celebrated by reason of a miraculous crucifix made from a portion of the true Cross. A convent of the Reform had been founded there during the lifetime of Saint Teresa, although she herself had not presided at the foundation, being occupied at the time with that of Seville. She had been careful, however, as she tells us, to name as Prioress a religious in whom she had great confidence, Mother Anne of Saint Albert.

When Saint John visited the convent in 1586, this saintly religious spoke to him of her desire to see a monastery of friars established in Caravaca, in spite of the inevitable difficulties of the foundation. He told her to recommend the affair to our Lord, with all her sisters, saying every day for this intention an anthem of Our Lady. He promised to do the same. Afterwards he went to say Mass; and as he mounted the altar steps Mother Anne of Saint Albert saw around him a bright light which increased in brilliancy as the Holy Sacrifice proceeded. At first it seemed to issue from

the tabernacle, later from the Sacred Host; while the Saint, whom it invested, shone like the sun. The Mass lasted a long time, bringing wonderful joy to the nuns whose tears flowed in abundance.

Later on, the Prioress begged him to say what had happened. "I saw what you saw," he replied; and was straightway rapt in ecstasy. On returning to himself he said: "God showed great things to me a sinner; and in such majesty that I was not able to go on with the Mass." On being further importuned he added: "My soul is now so filled with heavenly consolations that I dare not be alone and recollected: they are too much for my strength. Now and then I have to refrain from saying Mass lest something marvellous should take place. I have asked our Lord to give me greater strength, or to take me out of life; this He will not do so long as I have the care of souls." A few days later he said to her: "This, my daughter, is what I heard in prayer: 'Tell the Mother Prioress to procure the foundation of a monastery of Discalced friars; I shall protect her in this undertaking; but she must do her part by asking the permission of the Court of Chancery and the consent of the city, as though she were assured of the establishment of this monastery.'"

Later in the year, Saint John was commissioned by the Provincial to proceed to Madrid with the Venerable Anne of Jesus and the nuns chosen for that foundation. They both knew how ardently Saint Teresa had desired to see houses of the Reform established in the capital of Spain, because of the great glory they would bring to God. A miracle that had accompanied the opening of her coffin on the first of January, 1586, had moved the Cardinal, Archbishop of Toledo, not merely to permit, but to solicit earnestly, the foundation of two houses of

the Reform in Madrid. That of the friars was begun at once; that of the nuns was delayed by various circumstances; and it was not until September that the journey from Granada was undertaken.

Great preparations were made in Madrid for the reception of the Carmelites who were expected to arrive on the Eve of Our Lady's Nativity. Saint John of the Cross and the Venerable Anne of Jesus wished to avoid a public demonstration and decided to delay their entrance into the city until after sunset. The consequence was that they found themselves at nightfall on a very bad road at some considerable distance from the city. Suddenly a brilliant light shone all around them, so that they were able to continue their journey in safety. The drivers of their coaches wondered, but concluded that the light proceeded from torches at the royal palace. The nuns knew better. The supernatural joy which filled their hearts, and the sweet perfume which accompanied the light, betokened the presence of their seraphic Mother. The Venerable Anne of Jesus, moreover, did not hesitate to make known that she had been told by the Saint how pleased she was with her for undertaking this foundation; and that she was to be of good cheer for that God would be greatly glorified by her daughters in Madrid.

It was late that night when the nuns took possession of the house secured for them. Next morning, the Feast of Our Blessed Lady's Nativity, Saint John said the first Mass and placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle of their little chapel. That same day, he presided at the election when the Venerable Anne of Jesus was chosen Prioress, after which he went back to Granada.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO PAPAL BRIEFS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

In April, 1859, a Chapter was held at Valladolid, at which our Saint was relieved of his charge as Vicar-provincial, but appointed for the third time, Prior of Granada. He had counted on being set free from all responsibility; and he earnestly begged to be allowed to spend the rest of his days as a simple friar. His entreaties were unavailing, however; so he went back to his post at Los Martires where he was welcomed with great joy. He increased his austerities, and prayed with all his might for the one token of love that his soul desired—to suffer and to be despised. There was no other way of assuaging the heavenly thirst which consumed him.

Still, with the common sense which characterised him as it did Saint Teresa, he busied himself with the duties which his position as superior entailed. He saw to the completion of the monastery buildings, and to the laying out of vineyards and olive groves, planting a cedar with his own hands, and taking his share of the hardest work. Once more we find his brother Francisco labouring among the friars, and pointed out by the Prior as the person nearest and dearest to him in all the world. A letter written by him about this time, to the nuns at

Veas, is so pregnant with spiritual wisdom that we quote it in full:

"Jesus, Mary, be in your souls,

"My daughters in Christ,

Your letter consoled me much, and may our Lord reward you for it. It was not through want of will that I have refrained from writing to you, for I truly wish you all good; but because it seemed to me that enough had been said already to effect all that was needful; and that what is wanting, if indeed anything be wanting, is not writing or speaking—whereof ordinarily there is more than enough—but silence and work. For whereas speaking distracts, silence and action collect the thoughts and strengthen the spirit. As soon, therefore, as a person understands what has been said to him for his good, he has no further need to heed or to discuss; but to set himself to practice what he has learnt, with silence and attention, in humility, charity, and contempt of self; not turning aside incessantly to seek after novelties which serve only to satisfy the desire in outward things—failing, however, to satisfy it really—and to leave it weak and empty, devoid of interior virtue. The result is unprofitable in every way; for a man who, before he has digested his last meal, takes another—the natural heat being wasted upon both—cannot convert all this food into the substance of his body, and sickness follows. It is most necessary, my daughters, to know how to avoid the devil and our own sensuality, for if we do not we shall find ourselves to be very unprofitable servants, very far away from the virtues of Christ; and in the end we shall awake from our sleep to find that our toil and labour have been the reverse of what they seemed to us to be. The lamp that we believed to be alight will be found extinguished, because the breath whereby we thought to kindle it served perhaps to put it out. There are no better means to avoid this, and to preserve spirituality, than suffering, doing good works, silence, custody of the senses; the practice of,

and the inclination to, solitude, forgetfulness of creatures and of all that is going on, even if the world were to come to an end.

"Never fail, whatever may befall you, be it good or evil, to keep your heart quiet and calm in the tenderness of love, that it may suffer in all circumstances. For so momentous a thing is perfection, and so priceless is spiritual joy; and may God grant that this may be enough, for it is impossible to make progress, but by the way of good works and suffering courageously, always in silence. I have heard, my daughters, that the soul, which is ready to talk and converse with creatures, is not very ready to converse with God; for if it were, it would be at once drawn forcibly inwards, be silent and avoid all conversation; for God would that the soul should delight in Him, rather than in any creature, however excellent and profitable. I commend myself to your charitable prayers; and do you rest assured that, scant as my charity is, it is so bound up it you, that I never forget those to whom I owe so much in our Lord. May He be with us all! Amen."

Meanwhile the Provincial, Father Nicholas Doria, laboured successfully for the complete independence of the Discalced friars and nuns. Without taking into his confidence the chapter of the former, he demanded and obtained from the Holy See some weighty concessions, as, for example, the substitution of the Roman rite for the venerable old Carmelite rite, the erection of the province of the Discalced religious into an autonomous congregation subject only in name to the General: an entirely new form of government whereby all authority was taken from Provincials and Priors and concentrated in a Board of six consultors presided over by the Vicar General of the new congregation (July 10th, 1587). At a meeting of the Definitory it was decided that the new regulations should be com-

municated to all the houses of the Reform, and that a Chapter of the Province, for the formal acceptance and promulgation of the papal Bull, should be held in Madrid. Before the assembly broke up, however, Father Jerome Gracian was censured by the Provincial, and thereupon summarily deprived of all authority and any voice in Chapter.

In June, 1588, the Chapter was held at Madrid. After the election of the four definitors, the first of whom was Father John of the Cross, it proceeded to that of the Vicar General; for, the friars now formed, not a province but a congregation, and their superior was to be no longer a provincial, but a Vicar of the General. Father Nicholas Doria was elected Vicar General, but only by little more than half the votes, thirty-two out of fifty-eight. Six consultors were then chosen, the first being Father John of the Cross.

When the election was finished, a discussion was held on that point of the government, which had aroused the greatest opposition among the friars and nuns, since the contents of the Bull had been made known. There was to be in future a council of seven, consisting of the Vicar General and his six consultors. It was to pass judgment on all the affairs of the Reform, without exception. It was also to choose not only the Priors, but the sub-Priors, the preachers and even the confessors.

Saint John of the Cross having foreseen the grave inconveniences which would result from this arrangement, especially where the nuns were concerned, represented how painful it would be for them, and in most cases how futile, to have every trivial occurrence in their convents discussed by a council of friars. He reminded his brethren that Saint Teresa had wisely

granted to her nuns complete liberty with regard to confessors. His earnest pleading on their behalf, however, only served to mark him out for suspicion and distrust on the part of the Vicar General, who could brook no opposition to his plans, and who had already secured the insertion of this particular point in the Papal Brief. His advice that the council should have its seat, not at Madrid, where the interference of the court might prove harmful, but at Segovia, was accepted; and he was elected Prior of that monastery with nomination as President of the council in the absence of the Vicar General.

Taking up once more the burden of superiority, the Saint went to Segovia where, it will be remembered, a monastery had been founded through the liberality of his penitent, Dona Ana de Penalosa. The site first chosen had proved unhealthy; and she generously supplied the funds for another, where a new building was at once begun. Again the great mystic was to be seen toiling with all his might among the workmen. Again Francisco de Yepes was invited to lend his aid, and was treated with the utmost cordiality by the brother who never forgot what he and his mother had owed to the goodness and unselfishness of the first-born. The simplicity, humility and spirit of prayer which animated both the sons, came to them under God through Catalina's example and early teaching; and as the years passed they grew closer together in Christ.

Saint Teresa had commended the mother of her first friars to her nuns of Medina del Campo; and it was about this time that she died there, having been received into the Order under the name of Sister Mary of the Incarnation. After her death she appeared to her sons while they were together at prayer. She told

them of the glory that was hers in heaven, and while she was speaking, the little five-year old daughter of Francisco, who had died some time previously, appeared at her side. Together they were heard singing:

El Rey de la Gloria
De amor muere y llama
De la Santa Cruz
Que tuvo por cama.

(The King of Glory–
Died of love, and calls us
From the Holy Cross
Which He had for couch.)

The brothers understood the call, and realised that the Cross was to be more than ever the proof of their love.

When the building was finished, the Prior chose for his use the smallest and most inconvenient cell, in which there was barely room for his bed. His only books were his bible and his breviary. In the garden there was a little grotto in which he could not stand upright, but from which he could let his mind rest on a vast horizon. It was here, when not in the Church, that he spent the greater part of his days and nights, in almost uninterrupted contemplation and intercessory prayer. He was drawing closer and closer to the Crucified; and his soul was preparing for its flight from the Cross to Heaven. One day he went to hear the confession of a sick sister in the convent at Segovia. He had to pass before a picture in which our Lord was represented as a grape beneath the wine-press. He only prevented himself from entering into a rapture by clasping his arms round a large crucifix in the middle of the cloister where his tender ejaculations proclaimed aloud the longings of his heart. What were they?

Saint Teresa's one desire when she had reached the state of transforming union—the spiritual marriage of the soul with Christ—had been "to suffer or to die"; that of Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, "not to die, but to suffer." What words shall express our Saint's idea of perfect love? There was in the Church of the monastery a figure in relief representing our Lord falling beneath the Cross. One night he knelt before it absorbed in silent prayer when a voice came to him from it saying: "John, what reward dost thou ask for all the services thou hast rendered Me?" The Saint, who made little account of sensible visions or locutions, paid no attention the first or second time; but when the question was put for the third time, and he felt in the depths of his soul that it came from God, he answered fervently: "Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee." This simple phrase expressed the sum of the Saint's teaching as to the essence and test of the mystical life. "Are there in the history of the Church," asked Cardinal Mercier, "many events comparable to this sublime dialogue?" This figure of Our Lord is still preserved in the monastery of Segovia with great veneration. It is placed under a magnificent canopy, and before it a silver lamp given and endowed by the Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Moscroso, perpetually burns.

Fot a time it seemed as if joy, not suffering, honour, not contempt, were to be the answer to the Saint's request; but the day was not far distant when it was to be granted to the full. "In 1588 and 1589, writes Dr. Baruzi, "the struggle against Doria was vigorous; and it may be supposed that John of the Cross already directed the attitude towards it, taken by such intrepid Carmelites as Anne of Jesus, or Mary of Saint Joseph. At the same time these years were for him a time of

intense recollection . . . during which he seems to have reached the loftiest heights of prayer." We also learn from the MS. of Alba de Tormes that the poem "Entreme donde no supe," (I entered where I knew not) was composed during an ecstasy about this time. "The years at Segovia," concludes Dr. Baruzi, "if only we could read them aright, would reveal to us, we feel sure, a mystical secret beyond compare. They lead us to the final peroid (of the life we are studying) and to the drama of total self-surrender."

Here it is necessary to enter into details concerning the action of the Venerable Anne of Jesus which brought upon her the grave displeasure of her superiors, and upon Father John of the Cross as her director, their profound mistrust. When the article in the Papal brief, which bore immediate reference to the nuns, had been made known to them there was much sorrow and indignation at the thought of any change in their constitutions. They looked upon them as a sacred legacy from their foundress, and they entreated her successor to secure their preservation intact. The Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus saw no way of doing this but by an appeal to the Pope for their confirmation. She consulted holy and learned theologians as to whether such a course would be contrary to the obedience she owed to the new Vicar General. They decided that it was lawful for her to appeal to the Holy See, notwithstanding the consequences which might follow if the appeal were successful—the natural resentment of the friars, and the censures of the Vicar General.

In good faith then, and spurred on by her vehement desire to foster Saint Teresa's work at any cost, the Venerable sent deputies to Rome with a letter written by herself to Pope Sixtus V. Neither that letter nor

the reply which she is known to have received from the Pope has been preserved; but she won her cause; and the Brief, granting her request, reached Spain on August 20th, 1590. It aroused in her superior a not unreasonable feeling of angry surprise. The Vicar General managed to avoid its acceptance until the death of the Pope which occurred soon afterwards. He then himself submitted the Constitutions of the nuns to the Holy See in a slavishly literal translation. When they were returned with some amendments he retranslated them in the same slavish manner into Spanish; so that by this double translation the words of Saint Teresa were largely effaced. Moreover he refused to have anything further to do with the nuns. He convoked a Chapter at Madrid where, after discussing the advisibility of a counter-appeal to Rome, it was decided to let the Brief, obtained by the nuns, remain in force. All the convents of the Reform were to be, as it were, ignored by the friars; but no provision was made for their being governed by the Ordinaries.

Saint John of the Cross strongly deprecated this drastic measure. He pleaded earnestly that the convents should not be thus, as it were, cut off from the rest of the Congregation. But his defence of the nuns was listened to with impatience and some scorn; for they, without his knowledge or consent, had asked to have Father John of the Cross named as their Visitor. Not without some show of reason, therefore, did his brethren suspect that his advice to Mother Anne of Jesus lay at the root of all the trouble. A few months more, and his prayer to be despised would openly receive its answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GRANTING OF THE SAINT'S HEROIC PETITION.

THE time had come at last for the Saint to approach as nearly as possible to his Divine Master, "despised and rejected of men." Sixtus V. who had issued both the briefs referred to in the preceding chapter, died on August 27th, 1590. Urban VII, who succeeded him on September 15th, did not live to be crowned, but after a sudden and short illness passed away on September 27th. He was succeeded by Gregory XIV, from whom in April, 1591, a third Brief concerning the final government of the Reform had been obtained by the friars.

In the General Chapter opened at Madrid on the 30th May, 1591, this Brief was promulgated, and measures were taken to secure its acceptance without further appeal. In order to remove from the scene of action Father John of the Cross, with whom no fault could be found beyond that of insisting on strict adherence to the constitutions drawn up by Saint Teresa, he was chosen to be Provincial of Mexico. After the elections the following points were discussed: the regulations to be made for the effective carrying out of the new mode of government, the case of Father Jerome Gracian, who was being recalled from Portugal, and the attitude to be observed towards the nuns.

While carefully avoiding anything like censure of the Vicar General's conduct, Saint John begged for moderation and leniency with those who had opposed his plans. He pointed out the difficulties likely to arise from the attempt to enforce so many new regulations (they are said to have amounted to three hundred). He urged that against Father Gracian's palpable weakness and misgovernment as Provincial, should be set his undoubted personal merit, and the esteem in which he had been held by Saint Teresa. Finally he begged that the measures proposed should be reconsidered, and their execution postponed if not entirely relinquished.

The sole effect of his arguments was the increased suspicion and mistrust of the assembly, many of whom sought to deprive him of all authority or influence in the Order. With this end in view, the Vicar General suggested to him privately the resignation of the office of Provincial of Mexico, to which he had but just then been appointed. The Saint was only too happy to comply, and thus to find himself released from the burden of superiority and set aside as unfit for any position of trust. He had been fully aware that contempt, not honour, was in store for him at Madrid. This was proved by his words to one of the nuns in Segovia who had said that she felt certain of his being elected Vicar General of Old Castile: "God will not inflict so great a scourge upon the Province. Believe me, my daughter, the Chapter will make little account of me. When I was recommending it to God in prayer He made this known to me."

After the close of the Chapter, he wrote the following characteristic letter to Mother Anne of Jesus (Ana de Jimena, foundress of the Convent in Segovia), who had set her heart on his being elected superior:

"Jesus be in your soul!

"I thank you very much for your letter which renders me more your debtor than I was before. Although what you desired has not come to pass, you should rejoice and give God thanks. His Majesty has so ordained and it is best for all. It remains only for us to submit our will, that we see it in the true light. For when things that we do not like befall us, they seem to us evil and contrary be they ever so good and profitable to our souls. But in this case there is plainly no evil to me or to any other. To me, indeed, it is most favourable, for being free and without the care of souls, I may, by God's help, if I like, enjoy peace and solitude, and the blessed fruit of forgetfulness of self and of all things.

"Others also will be the better for my being set side; for so they will escape the faults which, owing to my unfitness, they would have committed. What I beg of you then, my daughter, is to pray to God that He will continue to me this grace; for I fear that they will send me to Segovia and that I shall not be perfectly free. However, I shall do my utmost to escape from this burden also; but if I fail, Mother Anne of Jesus will not get out of my hands as she expects, and so will not die of grief of losing the opportunity, as she thinks, of becoming a very great saint. But whether I go or stay, wherever or however I may be, I shall never forget her, nor withdraw from the charge of her soul of which she speaks, because I really desire her eternal good. Now, therefore, until God gives it in heaven, let her exercise herself continually in the virtues of patience and mortification, endeavouring to become, through suffering, in some measure like to our great God, Who was humbled and crucified for us; because our life here is not good if we do not imitate Him. May His Majesty preserve you and make you increase daily in His love, as His holy and well-beloved child. Amen."

On the same day he wrote a shorter letter in a similar

strain to Mother Mary of the Incarnation, concluding with this memorable sentence: "Do you love, where there is no love, and you shall have love." He went back for a few days; but Segovia offered too many human consolations for him to stay there when he was left free to choose his place of residence. He withstood the entreaties and arguments of his devoted friends, saying to Dona Ana de Merendo y Penaloso, who begged him at least to return later. "No, I shall never return of myself; but you will one day bring me back," thus foretelling what actually came to pass after his death. He placed himself entirely in the hands of his superiors, only asking to be sent to some solitary place where he might prepare for the end, which he knew was not far distant. They proposed the monastery of Peñuela in Andalusia, whose site, already described in Ch. VII., was indeed "a desert place apart," to which he could hear the Master's voice bidding him "Come and rest awhile!" So he gladly turned his steps thither, reaching his destination in July, 1591.

He was welcomed with warm and sincere affection by the Prior, Father Diego of the Incarnation, who had remained one of his most devoted disciples. He begged the Saint to act in all things as if he were the Superior of the house, and to let him be Prior only in name. It was not to be expected, however, that one, whose sole desire was to be reputed the last and the least, would accede to such a request. Then Father Diego besought him at least to give them, from time to time, a spiritual conference. Many among the community had been his novices and they would listen eagerly to his counsels and put them in practice. To this he consented looking upon it as an act of obedience. Great was the joy of the friars as they gathered round him to learn anew the

lessons he knew so well how to convey to both mind and heart. He had reached the summit of the Mount of Perfection; and filled with burning zeal, would exclaim: "Let us take wing, let us fly aloft! What are we doing here, my brethren? Let us on to eternal life!" He was exemplifying the words of Saint Gregory Nazianzen: "Would you reign over souls in order to bring them to Jesus Christ? Rise ever higher and higher. Dwell among the eternal hills." It was there he now habitually dwelt, like all those who, even on earth, have known how to enter through the mystic door, Christ our Lord, into the Bosom of the Father.

Each morning, after meditation and Mass, he withdrew to a lonely cave near which a crystal spring gushed forth to water the wild plants around. There he remained alone with God, until the bell summoned him to some community exercise, at the close of which he would hasten back to his beloved solitude. There he enjoyed to the full that intercourse with the Divine Guest of his soul, which he describes so vividly in his commentary on "The Living Flame of Love." (Stanza IV., Par. 15).

"In that soul wherein no desire dwells, and out of which all images and forms of created things have been cast, the Beloved dwells most secretly Himself, and the purer the soul and the greater its estrangement from everything but God, the more intimate His converse and the closer His embrace . . . O how blessed is that soul which is ever conscious of God reposing and resting within it. How necessary it is for such a soul to flee from the matters of this world and to live in great tranquility so that nothing whatever shall disturb the Beloved 'at His repose.'"

It must not, however, be imagined that our Saint

took no interest in the concerns of the monastery or the welfare of his brethren. He had reached that state of transformation when the soul "effects through God in God, what He effects within it by Himself, because the will of both is one." (L. F. iii, 89). Miracles were not wanting to prove the reality of this union. To cite only one instance: The chief gardener of the monastery, Brother John of the Mother of God, fell seriously ill; and as the doctors gave no hope of his recovery it was thought advisable to send him to be nursed at Baeza where he would find greater conveniences than at Peñuela. Saint John realised the loss his death would mean to the community, and asked the Prior to send him word to return. When the sick man was brought back he took him tenderly in his arms and then blessed him. An instantaneous cure was the result.

It must have seemed to all who knew the Saint that he had at last reached the goal of his earthly desires—to be alone with God, and free from the cares and distractions which inevitably accompany posts of honour and responsibility. Nevertheless he was about to undergo a severe trial, all the more bitter because it was not to affect himself alone, but also those friars and nuns whose director he had been. Moreover the matter would give great scandal; and it would be the work of two of his own brethren.

During his term of office as Vicar Provincial of Andalusia his attention had been drawn to the conduct of two friars, whose external activities had passed the bounds of prudence and moderation. Eloquent and successful preachers, they were continually out of the monastery, and unduly intimate with seculars whose manners they affected in order, as they alleged, to obtain more influence and do more good. The Saint warned

them of the dangers to which they were exposing themselves, and exhorted them to practice more assiduously the prayer and penance which alone could render their missionary labours fruitful. His remonstrances having proved ineffectual he exercised his power as Visitor, and laid upon them the strict obligation to preach but rarely, to be present at the Divine Office, and to take their meals with the community, following the rule with regard to abstinence. They had gone so far as to make use of a dispensation, which they had obtained under pretence of not inconveniencing their brethren, in order to eat flesh meat in the houses of their friends. Their conduct had given great disedification ; and though they did not venture openly to disobey the Vicar Provincial they deeply resented his interference.

At the last Chapter one of the two, Father Diego, had been made consultor ; and perceiving the disrepute into which Father John of the Cross had fallen he allowed a desire for retaliation to take possession of him. He was charged with the commission of making enquiries as to the life of Father Jerome Gratian, with a view to his exclusion from the Order. He resolved, unauthorised, to do the same with regard to Father John of the Cross. By suggestion and intimidation he managed to secure the signatures of former penitents of the Saint to calumnies as base as they were incredible. He used to put enigmatical questions, writing down his own version of the answers given, and adding comments calculated to blacken the character of the man whose ruin he seemed bent on achieving.

So great was the disturbance of mind he occasioned by his interrogations that the disciples of Father John of the Cross began to conceal their admiration and affection for him lest they should get themselves into

trouble. Doubts of his sincerity and sanctity arose, and he soon found himself like his Divine Master treading the wine-press alone. But like Him also, "having joy set before Him, he endured the Cross, despising the shame." One day he was informed that there was question of depriving him of the habit of the Reform. He calmly replied that it was only the incorrigible who had to undergo so grave a penalty; as to himself, he was certain it could never be inflicted upon him since he was ready to correct himself of every fault and to perform any penance imposed upon him.

He took no measures to refute his calumniator; but there was no need; for, at the Chapter where the accuser hoped to see him finally condemned, a burst of indignation greeted the first words of the indictment. The document was burned in presence of the assembled fathers who, blinded as they had been and mistaken as to the attitude of Saint John towards the new constitutions, had never failed to recognise his uprightness, the sanctity of his conversation, and the austerity of his life. Nevertheless they considered it prudent to send him, not as superior, but as a simple member of the group about to set sail for the Indies. He received his mission without a word of remonstrance, only asking to be told how soon he had to be ready to start.

His sacrifice was accepted, but it was not to be carried out. He was attacked by a violent fever which prevented his embarcation. His sufferings were intense; and the Prior of Peñuela, always his fast friend, wrote to ask the Vicar Provincial if he might be removed to some other monastery so as to be within reach of the care and special treatment that he needed. Father Antonio, to whom the request was made, was no other than his first companion at Duruelo, and he granted it most willingly.

He wrote to Father John a letter of tender sympathy offering him the choice between Baeza and Ubeda. The Saint chose Ubeda. A glance at the reasons for and against the decision will give the clue to its motives.

At Baeza there would be found greater conveniences and better doctors. He had himself founded the college there and was still held in high esteem by his former friends at the university and in the city. Moreover, the Prior, Father Angel of the Presentation, was one of his most sincere and loyal disciples. On the other hand, the house recently founded at Ubeda was less convenient. There was not, in the monastery, any of his former novices or friends of later years. To crown all, its Prior had been the companion of the Saint's calumniator, had shared his resentment, and still nursed in his heart the bitter feelings which he had conceived. So it was Ubeda that Saint John of the Cross chose for the last step on his way to Calvary.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY HOME.

On the twenty-first of September, 1591, Saint John set out from Peñuela in the care of a lay brother. There was great sorrow and compassion in the community as the friars bade him farewell; for his disease was evidently making rapid progress; aud they felt sure they were looking upon his face for the last time. The journey was painful in the extreme. One of his legs was badly inflamed and the swelling increased day by day. As they neared the Gandalquiver, his companion besought him to dismount and rest beneath the shade of the beautiful bridge which spans the river where the bank rises rapidly to the site of the monastery of Ubeda. The Saint agreed, and then the brother begged him to take some nourishment; but he had nothing with him that the sick man could eat. Filled with compassion and anxiety, he continued his entreaties: "Is there nothing that your Reverence could take?" he said. "A little asparagus, perhaps," was the reply. But where was asparagus to be obtained in that lonely spot, and so late in the season?

So the two sat down; and presently moved, as was his wont, by the grandeur of the scene around him, Saint John began to speak of the marvellous power and

goodness of God. The brother was listening intently when suddenly he caught sight of a bundle of asparagus lying on a rock close by them. He at once took possession of it, and the Saint said he might keep it provided that he left some money to pay for it on the stone. But the good brother knew that it had been placed there miraculously; so, when Father John had eaten a little, he kept the rest to show his brethren in proof of God's watchful care and the holiness of the invalid of whom he had charge. This story has often been told, and one of the Saint's biographers, Don Manuel Munez Garnica, writing in 1875, says: "Reclining beneath the shade of that same bridge, I have recalled a thousand times the story of the asparagus, and I have traversed the road taken by Saint John from Peñuela. As I listened to the murmur of the same waters, leaning against the buttresses of the same bridge, surrounded by the same hills, warmed by the same sun, time seemed to have stayed its course, and everything remains the same." No, not everything, but only God.

The Saint and his companion continued their journey. At last it came to an end. The sick man was in a pitiable condition; and the hearts of his brethren were moved to compassion as they gathered round to welcome him. Not so the heart of the Prior who stood aloof, untouched by either the suffering or the sweet submission of his former superior, against whom he still nourished bitter feelings of resentment. On the following day, five running sores, in the form of a cross, appeared upon one of the Saint's feet; and his body became a living prey to corruption. The surgeon saw no way to give relief but by cutting out the diseased flesh from his foot, where the bones were soon laid

bare. He endured the pain without the slightest sign of feeling, and when the first part of the operation was over, he asked when it was to begin. He had been rapt in ecstasy; but for the remainder of his life the pain he suffered without a murmur passes comprehension.

A patience and a constancy so heroic won for him the admiration and affection of the friars, especially of his infirmarian, Brother Bernard of the Mother of God, who spared no pains to soothe and strengthen his agonising frame. Still the Prior, in his blind pride and resentment, showed himself more and more hard-hearted. He replaced the sympathetic infirmarian by a friar who shared his antipathy for the Saint, and forbade the other members of the community to go near him. When he visited the now almost dying man, it was only to upbraid him with the trouble and expense he occasioned. When he spoke of him to others it was to paint him as a selfish seeker after his own ease, and an enemy of strict observance. Further, he refused to allow him to profit by the charitable desires of certain ladies in the city, who had offered to see that the linen used in dressing his sores was properly washed and, when necessary, renewed. Neither would he permit the delicacies they provided to be given to the invalid.

The community grieved deeply over this unaccountably harsh treatment but without finding a way to remedy it. The Prior of Peñuela, who visited the Saint, was astounded at what he saw and heard. He failed to understand how a man of such reputed good parts as the Prior of Ubeda could act in so inhuman a manner. At last the former infirmarian, who had been withdrawn from his charitable ministrations, found a means of acquainting the Provincial with the state of affairs. Father Antonio hastened to the bedside of the

dying friar, and recognised at once the truth of all that had been reported to him. He severely censured the conduct of the Prior of Ubeda, reinstated the humane infirmarian in his office, and gave permission to all the community to visit, and console, and be edified by the heroic sufferer. He remained in the monastery for several days, by the end of which time a happy change had taken place in the sentiments of the Prior. Disabused of his prejudices, and freed at last from the blind passion which had caused his wrong judgment of the Saint, he turned towards him with all his heart. He could not express the gratitude he really felt for the privilege of having him at Ubeda; and he welcomed any suggestion of ways and means to alleviate his sufferings.

One day it occurred to Brother Bernard to have some good music in an adjoining room so as to distract the Saint from his pain. At first Father John would not hear of it; but in order to satisfy his infirmarian he finally agreed to the proposal. The musicians came, and when they had been playing for some time, Brother Bernard opened the door leading into the infirmary to see how their efforts were succeeding. He found that his patient had heard no earthly music, but had been in a heavenly rapture. "Give them some refreshment, my son, and let them go," he said, "it is not reasonable that I should entertain with music the sufferings God sends me." Then he gave vent to the one desire of his heart, the one comfort he longed for, quoting the words of the psalmist: "I shall be filled when His glory shall appear."

As he lingered on in this marvellous union of pain and peace, his body covered with ulcers, his soul serene and uplifted, the beholders could not but compare him

mentally to that model of hope and patience, the Patriarch Job. One day, reading their thoughts, he said: "Ah, that was suffering indeed; but I am lying in a good bed, not on a dunghill; and instead of a potsherd, I am given linen to cleanse my sores. My sufferings are as nothing. Our Lord has laid his hand lightly upon me; yea, rather one of His fingers; and that so gently that it has scarcely touched me." It was remarked that instead of the bad odour which usually accompanies corrupt flesh, a delicious fragrance came from the Saint's ulcers and the linen used in dressing them.

The end was now fast approaching; and on December the seventh, 1591, the doctor declared that it was close at hand. "Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi," replied the Saint, adding in his own language: "Since I have heard the good news, I feel no pain whatever." A message was sent to the Provincial, and preparations were being made for the administration of the Last Sacraments; but Saint John asked that they should be deferred for a few days, promising to warn his brethren in good time. As the event proved, the day and the hour of his death had been revealed to him. But before that moment arrived, the last touches were to be given to this living image of Jesus Crucified. To his terrible bodily pain was now added a mental anguish impossible to describe. The victim was not only fastened to the Cross, but left thereon in dereliction of soul.

On Friday, December the thirteenth, he enquired what day it was, and what hour. From time to time he repeated his question as to the hour; and at one in the afternoon he said: "I keep asking, because, glory be to God I have to chant Matins with Our Lady

in Heaven." He grew more and more deeply recollected, and from time to time was rapt in ecstasy. His eyes, usually closed, would open now and again to gaze lovingly on his Crucifix. But for the greater part of that day his soul shared the desolation of his dying Saviour. When the Provincial arrived he could only say: "Forgive me, Father, for remaining silent, I am consumed by anguish." The Provincial spoke of the reward awaiting him for all that he had done and suffered for the Reform; but the Saint cried out: "O Father, do not speak of that! I only remember my grievous sins and the merits of my Redeemer." A little later, when one of the friars thought to console him by a similar allusion to his labours: "There is nothing that I ever did," he said, "that is not now to me a source of shame."

About five in the evening he asked for the Last Sacraments, which he received with the utmost devotion, himself making all the responses. Afterwards he begged the Provincial and the others present to go to rest, promising that they should be awakened at the right moment. When it was nine o'clock he said: "I have yet three hours to wait," adding with the psalmist: "Incolatus meus prolongatus est." A deep silence followed until, hearing the bell of a neighbouring monastery ring for Matins, he said: "By the goodness of God, I am to sing them in heaven with Our Lady." Then, addressing himself to her he exclaimed: "O my Lady and my Queen! I thank thee for the favour thou hast granted me." He then relapsed into a stillness so profound, that the infirmarian was about to summon the community; but Saint John divining their thoughts, said softly: "Why disturb their rest? Do you not see that it is not yet time?"

"Towards half-past-ten, a wonderful change passed over him, and some of the brethren who had come into the room perceived that bodily pain and mental anguish had given place to a wonderful ease and contentment. He became joyously triumphant, and intoned the Miserere, which was taken up by the friars present together with certain gentlemen who had been admitted to witness the last moments of the Saint. Other psalms were then sung by the improvised choir, the Saint retaining his exultant look and repeatedly kissing his crucifix. At half-past eleven he asked that the bell might be rung to summon the brethren. They entered in solemn order, led by the Provincial, Father Antonio of Jesus. The old man of fourscore years fell upon his knees and begged the blessing of the dying Saint for himself and the community; but not until the request became a command, did the humble friar raise his hand to bless his brethren. As he made the sign of the cross over them, tears of mingled joy and sorrow filled their eyes, for they knew that they were losing his earthly presence only to gain his heavenly protection.

He lay there in perfect peace, kissing his crucifix over and over again, and answering with the community the prayers for his departing soul. At their close, he asked for a portion of the Canticle of Canticles, which was read aloud by the Prior, the Saint murmuring from time to time: "Pearls! O what pearls." When it was close upon midnight, he said to Brother Francis: "Go and ring for Matins." A deep silence ensued, during which a brilliant light was seen around the head of the Saint, while a celestial perfume filled the air. When the first sound of the bell broke the stillness, he asked why it was being rung. On receiving the

welcome answer he expected, he exclaimed: "For Matins! Glory be to God." Then with a radiant smile he looked round upon all present and said: "Farewell, I go to sing them in heaven." Closing his eyes, he kissed the crucifix for the last time, and with the words: "In manus Tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum," he passed away. It was Saturday, December fourteenth, 1591.

At the moment of passing he appeared to several persons in different places, among whom we are not surprised to note his brother Francisco and the Venerable Anne of Jesus. To the former he gave the glad tidings of the happiness and glory which he was enjoying; to the latter he made known not only the state of bliss into which he had entered, but certain secrets concerning the Reform, present and future, which filled her with joy and gratitude. As soon as the passing-bell began to toll, crowds of men and women besieged the monastery, clamouring to see and venerate the body of the Saint; the men were admitted, and all sought to obtain some relic, or to touch the sacred remains with something they could carry away.

Early on the Saturday morning, the crowds had grown to such vast dimensions, that the body was carried into the church, so that all might satisfy their devotions. Then began a procession which continued until the solemn Mass of Requiem. At the close of his sermon the preacher said: "I do not ask you, as is the custom, to pray for the soul of the departed. He who has gone from us is a Saint; his soul is in Paradise. I ask him to obtain for us from God, the grace to follow in his footsteps." The body was laid in a vault beneath one of the aisles, close to the sanctuary. Day by day, the people came to pray near the tomb, from which as night

fell, a brilliant light arose which illuminated the entire church.

It will be remembered that, on leaving Segovia, Saint John had promised Doña Aña de Penalosa, that she should one day bring him back to the monastery she had founded in that city. It had become singularly dear to the Saint, since he heard in its church the gracious question addressed to him by our Lord as related in Chapter XIII. Doña Aña now undertook, in fulfilment of that prediction, to have the body of the Saint removed from Ubeda to Segovia. It was an all but hopeless undertaking for, not only the friars, but the people o the place, were certain to oppose it to the utmost. Doña Aña's brother, Don Luis, being an auditor of the royal council, succeeded in obtaining an order for the removal of the relics to Segovia. It was necessary to set about doing so with the greatest precaution and secrecy. Nine months were allowed to pass; then one of the King's Sergeant's, Francisco de Medina Zavallos, arrived at Ubeda with an order from the Vicar General for the transfer of the Saint's body. At eleven that night the Prior conducted Zavallos to the church where two lay brothers opened the grave. The body was found to be fresh and supple and a delightful fragrance was emitted by it. A technical difficulty arose, for the order stated that Zavallos was to remove "the bones"; and strange to relate, quicklime was now put into the tomb in order to make it possible to carry out the order literally. Before this was done, however, the Prior, at the Sergeant's request, cut off one of the fingers of the Saint to be given to Doña Aña in proof of what had taken place.

Nine months more were permitted to elapse; and then Zavallos returned to fulfil his commission. With

the same secrecy as before the grave was opened. The body was found almost as it had been left; for the lime had dried but not consumed the flesh. It was reverently enshrined in a casket brought for the purpose, and carried off in the silence and darkness of the night. But its removal was not unaccompanied by miraculous signs and prodigies. While the tomb was being opened, Brother Bartholmew of Saint Basil had been awakened by the words: "If thou hast a mind to see the holy body of John of the Cross, arise!" The brother hastened to the church, but was met at the door by the Prior, who bade him return to his cell and keep secret what he had heard and seen. When Zavallos and his escort had taken the route to Segovia, and were passing a solitary hill beyond Ubeda, they heard from its summit many voices crying out: "Whither are ye going with the body of the Saint?" Seized with anxiety they hastened on with their treasure, being often stopped by passers-by who asked the cause of the wonderful perfume that filled the air around them.

When they arrived at Madrid, where Doña Aña was then staying, the precious casket was left for the time being in the care of the Carmelite nuns there. Great was their joy, and great the joy of Doña Aña, who obtained leave to have one of the arms of the Saint detached and left in her possession. The casket was then closed, and having been covered by the nuns with laurel leaves, went on its way. As it neared Segovia the marvellous perfume which accompanied it attracted crowds of men and women who accompanied it to the monastery gates. The friars received it with joyful reverence, opened it, and found the body still incorrupt. It was clothed anew in the habit of the Reform and placed in a fitting shrine, which was kept in the sacristy

lest unauthorised honours should be paid to a Saint not yet beatified.

When, however, the Bishop of the diocese, accompanied by the Governor of Segovia and all the grandees of the neighbourhood, came to venerate the relics, the shrine was brought into the church. The miraculous perfume continued to fill the air around it; and so great was the concourse of the devout clients of the Saint, that the Superiors of the Order had the shrine moved back into the sacristy.

It had been replaced there, when Francisco de Yepes, hearing that his brother's body had been brought to Segovia, hastened to that city; but the Prior, under obedience to his superiors, could not let him see it. In great grief he went to Madrid, where Doña Aña, who had begun to scruple retaining the arm she had taken possession of, gave it to Francisco to take to Segovia and see it placed with the rest of the body. The Prior, however, without waiting to hear Francisco's message, showed himself so stern and unapproachable, that the good man went silently away with his brother's arm to Medina del Campo. He took it to the Carmelite convent where his mother was buried; not without a secret joy at the thought of the precious relic having by God's Providence been brought to that spot.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEATIFICATION AND CANONISATION.

FROM the moment of the Saint's death numerous miracles bore witness to the favour he had found with God, and the power of his intercession on behalf of all who invoked his aid. We shall confine ourselves to one remarkable, almost unique type, the scenes which appeared as pictures in the relics of the Saint. Francisco de Yepes always carried about with him a crystal reliquary containing a small relic of the saint. On the feast of the Epiphany, 1593, being in prayer, he was seized with a great longing to see his Juan once again. He took out the reliquary and gazed upon it in loving veneration, as was his wont when the days of his exile seemed to him particularly sad and lonely. He was about to press it to his lips when, to his unspeakable wonder and delight, he saw distinctly, as though painted upon the flesh by a master hand, an exquisite group—his brother kneeling at the feet of Our Blessed Lady with the Divine Infant in her arms. The little Jesus had His left arm round His Mother's neck while the right was stretched out so that His hand rested on the head of the Saint.

The picture was seen by many, though not by all who venerated the relic; but it was not always the

same; nor was the apparition confined to this particular relic. In all the relics of the flesh of the saint some saw, though others failed to see, the likeness of Saint John himself. He would be represented either kneeling alone before a Crucifix or in the company of other saints and angels. The reality and supernatural character of these pictures were attested, after due examination by doctors, artists and others well qualified to judge, in a declaration of the ecclesiastical tribunal of Valladolid. The document was signed by eminent members of the University —doctors of theology and of medicine, by the lawyers of the royal court, the superiors of various religious orders, and the canons of the cathedral, and its validity confirmed by the bishop in 1615.

Needless to say, these miraculous pictures worked wonders in the souls of those to whom it was vouchsafed to behold them. One notable instance may be cited. Father Peter of the Mother of God, Definitor General of the Order, an eminently holy friar, had in his possession a relic of the Saint, but had never been privileged with a sight of one of these pictures. He became somewhat troubled at the thought that this privation might be due to his personal unworthiness. He multiplied his prayers and penances but without obtaining his request. One day as he was on a journey which necessitated his stopping at an inn in Alcala la Real he was told that one of the servants, a Turkish woman, had obstinately resisted every effort made to convince her of the truth of Christianity. Obeying a strong impulse the religious took out his reliquary and calling her to him said: "See, Fatima, what a beautiful thing this is!" She took the reliquary in her hands and began to look at it curiously, when suddenly she exclaimed: "O beautiful Lady! O lovely Boy!" She then called to another

servant, a Christian, bidding her look at the wonderful Lady and Child. The other servant saw the picture and explained its meaning. Fatima's mind and heart instantaneously grasped the truth of the Incarnation and the Diviue Motherhood of Mary. She was baptised; and to the good friar was given the light to understand that God had worked the miracle for the conversion of the poor Turkish woman, which had not been vouchsafed to him for whom it was unnecessary; and that his prayer had thus been answered in a better way.

More than twenty years had passed since the death of the Saint. His memory was still green, not only among his brethren, his spiritual daughters in Carmel, and the privileged souls outside the cloister whom he had led along the path of perfection, but also among the many whom he had helped in their necessities or comforted in their sorrows. It must not be imagined that, great mystic as he was, he was insensible to the daily cares and needs of his fellow-Christians, or of those pagans in far-off lands whom his great heart had yearned to see within the Kingdom of Christ. Many who had never known him in life had experienced the power of his intercession with God, and the day was at hand when his name would find its place in the calendar of the Church's saints.

In 1616, the superiors of the Reform began the judicial enquiries within the Order as to the heroic sanctity of his life. At the outset a striking miracle, recalling the chastisement inflicted on the father of John the Baptist for his unbelief, testified to the will of God with regard to the declaration of the sanctity of John of the Cross. A friar of the monastery in Granada when summoned as a witness in the cause refused to speak, saying: "What do I know about Father John of the Cross?"

Instantly he lost the power of speech, but after an hour's bitter anguish and repentance his tongue was loosened and he gave his testimony with joy and gratitude.

Numerous witnesses—ecclesiastics of note, religious superiors and others, many persons of distinction in Ubeda, Baeza, Granada, Medina del Campo, Salamanca, Valladolid and elsewhere, willingly made their depositions on oath. The miracles attributed to the intercession of the Saint were subjected to a rigorous examination and declared genuine, being, as the Papal Bull expressed it: "The means by which God chose to make known to the world the holiness of His servant." More than half a century passed, so thorough and detailed are the investigations required by the Church before pronouncing her final decision; then, on the twenty-fifth of January 1675, Pope Clement X. declared that, throughout the world John of the Cross might receive "the title of Blessed;" that "his relics might be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, and his pictures ornamented by rays of glory," and that Mass might be celebrated in his honour "at Fontiveros, where the servant of God was born; at Ubeda, where he gave up his soul to his Creator; and at Segovia, where lies his venerated body;" as well as in all the monasteries and convents of the Carmelite Order.

Another fifty years were to elapse before the canonisation of the Saint, although the juridical process was closed in 1705 when the following miracle had taken place. A member of the community of the Annonciades in Neufchatel was lying seriously ill, having lost a great quantity of blood through repeated and violent hemorrhages, and, finally, having become paralysed and been given up by the doctors. On Palm Sunday, being in the greatest distress because she was not able to join

in the services of the Church, her eyes fell on a picture of Blessed John of the Cross hanging at her bed ; she earnestly begged him to cure her so that she might be able to go to the choir. Instantaneously she received the use of her right hand and arm. As she continued to invoke the Saint with fervour, she gradually recovered the use of her limbs, and in a short time was radically cured.

In the Bull of Canonisation, issued in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII., we read that John of the Cross was "a wonderful man, most dear to God, feared by the demons, gentle in character, constant in adversity, renowned throughout Spain for his gifts of miracle and prophecy, and divinely instructed, like Teresa, in the secrets of mystical theology which he has explained in his writings." On the occasion of the bicentenary of his canonisation in 1926, our Saint was proclaimed by Pope Pius XI., Doctor of Mystical Theology.

Before proceeding to the study of his writings, with which we propose to end this little book, we cannot do better than quote a few passages of the essay by Cardinal Wiseman, prefixed to the first English edition of the Works of Saint John of the Cross.

"It is not improbable that some who take up these volumes, or dip into them here and there, may conceive that they were written by a dreamy ascetic who passed his life in hazy contemplation of things unreal and unpractical. Yet it was quite the contrary . . . We do not possess any autobiography of Saint John as we do of Saint Teresa, or the more active portion and character of his life would be at once apparent . . . In one of his letters he writes :

"'I wrote to you in haste when I left Granada for the foundation at Cordova. I have since received your letter

there, and those of the gentlemen who went to Madrid thinking they should find me at the Council. You must know, however, that it never met; for we have been waiting to finish these visitations and foundations; while our Lord is now making such haste in the matter, that we are without strength to follow Him. The friars have been received at Cordova with the greatest joy and solemnity on the part of the whole city . . . I am now busied at Seville with the removal of our nuns, who have bought some very considerable houses; though they cost about 14,000 ducats, they are worth more than 20,000. They are now established there . . . Before my departure I intend to establish another house of friars here, so that there will be two of our Order in Seville. Before the feast of Saint John, I shall set out for Eciga where, with the divine blessing, we shall found another; thence to Malaga, and then to the Council.'

"This is only a few months' work, or rather some weeks; for the interval described in the letter is from the Ascension to the twenty-fourth of June. We must allow some portion of this time for the slow travelling of those days and those regions, over sierras and on mule-back. And then, Saint John's travels were not triumphal progresses, but often painful pilgrimages, crossed by arrests and even long imprisonments, embittered by personal unkindness.

"Yet with calm firmness he persevered, and travelled, and worked at the establishment of his new houses in many parts of Spain, till the Order was fully and permanently planted. In fact if we only look at his life we should naturally conclude that he was a man of an operative mind, always at work, ever in movement, who could not afford much time for inward concentration on abstract subjects.

"But when we read his writings another high quality,

for which we are not prepared, must strike us forcibly as entering into the composition of his character . . . One feels, in reading him, that one has to deal with the master of a science. There is no wandering from the first purpose, no straying aside from the pre-determined road, even after flowers that grow on its sides. Every division and sub-division of the way has been charted from the beginning by one who saw it all before him. And the secret lies in this and nothing more: Saint John invents nothing, borrows nothing from others, but gives us clearly the results of his own experiences in himself and others . . . He represents the ideal of one who has passed, as he had done, through the career of the spiritual life, through its struggles and its victories . . . His mind is eminently poetical, imaginative, tender and gentle. Whatever mystical theology may appear to the mind of the unitiated, to Saint John it was clearly a bright and well loved pursuit; it was a work of the heart more than of the head . . . Hence, with every rigour of logical precision, and an unbending exactness in his reasonings, there is blended a buoyancy of feeling, a richness of varied illustration, and often a sweet and elegant fancy playing with grave subjects so as to render them attractive."

These extracts will explain the reasons which induce us to add the following chapters of what may be termed The Inner Life of Saint John of the Cross discovered in his Writings: that is to say, the ideal at which he aimed and which he succeeded not merely in describing but in realising. In the limited space at our command we can only try to make clear the way in which the Saint practised and taught the simple truth: "Leave all and you shall find all." We shall give the poems which formed the texts of his teaching, not making many

comments of our own, but quoting from Saint John's own commentaries, such extracts as may enkindle in the reader's soul the desire to possess, and study, and put in practise the teaching contained in The Ascent of Mount Carmel, The Dark Night of the Soul, A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ, and The Living Flame of Love.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL.

"THE following stanzas are a summary of the doctrine contained in this book of the ascent of Mount Carmel. They also describe how we are to ascend to the summit of it, that is, to the high state of perfection called here union of the soul with God."

I

"In a dark night,
With anxious love inflamed,
O happy lot!
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest.

II

In darkness and in safety
By the secret ladder, disguised,
O happy lot!
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now at rest.

III

In that happy night,
In secret, seen of none,
Seeing naught myself,
Without other light or guide
Save that which in my heart was burning.

IV

That light guided me
More surely than the noonday sun
To the place where He was waiting for me,
Whom I knew well,
And where none appeared.

V

O guiding night;
O night more lovely than the dawn;
O night that hast united
The lover with His beloved
And changed her into love.

VI

On my flowery bosom,
Kept whole for Him alone,
There He reposed and slept:
And I caressed Him and the waving
Of the cedars fanned Him.

VII

As His hair floated in the breeze
That blew from the turret,
He struck me on the neck
With His gentle hand,
And all sensation left me.

VIII

I continued in oblivion lost,
My head was resting on my love;
Lost to all things and myself,
And amid the lilies forgotten
Threw all my cares away.

STANZA I.

"The meaning of this stanza is that the soul went forth, led of God, through love of Him only, and with that love inflamed, in the dark night which is the privation of and the purgation from all sensual desires in al

outward things of this world; all the pleasures of the flesh and all the satisfactions of the will. This is wrought in this purgation of sense; and for this reason it is said that the soul went forth, its house, that is the sensual part, being at rest—all its desires being at rest and asleep, and the soul asleep to them; for there is no going away from the pains and vexations of the desires till they be mortified and put to sleep . . .

The happy lot of the soul then consists in its being led of God into this night, from which so great a blessing results, but into which it could not have entered by itself, because no one is able in his own strength to empty his heart of all desires so as to draw near to God . . .

The night is divided into three parts. The first, that of sense, may be likened to the commencement of night, when material objects begin to be invisible. The second, of faith, may be compared to midnight which is utter darkness. The third resembles the close of night, which is God when the dawn of day is at hand . . .

Instructions for the Subduing of our Desires.

Be continually careful and earnest in imitating Christ in everything, conforming thyself to His life: for this end thou must meditate thereon that thou mayest know how to imitate it, and conduct thyself in all things as He would have done Himself. To do this well, every satisfaction offered to the senses which is not for God's honour and glory must be renounced and rejected for the love of Jesus Christ, Who in this life neither had nor sought any other pleasure than doing the will of His Father, which was His meat as He tells us Himself.

For instance, if the pleasure of listening to anything which tends not to the service of God presents itself seek not that pleasure . . .

In order to mortify and calm the four natural passions of joy, hope, fear, and grief . . . strive always, not after that which is most easy, but after that which is difficult; not after great things but after little things.

Think humbly and contemptuously of thyself, and desire that others may do so . . . That thou mayest be everything seek to be nothing . . . In detachment the spirit finds quiet and repose; for, coveting nothing, nothing wearies it by elation, and nothing oppresses it by dejection, because it stands in the centre of its own humility: for as soon as it covets anything it is immediately fatigued thereby.

'With anxious love inflamed.'

The soul has passed out and gone forth in the dark night of sense to the union of the Beloved. For in order to overcome our desires and to deny ourselves in all things, our love and inclination for which are wont so to inflame the will that it delights therein, we require another and greater fire of another and nobler love—that of the Bridegroom—so that having all our joy in Him and deriving from Him all our strength, we may gain such resolution and courage as shall enable us easily to abandon and deny all besides. It was necessary in order to subdue our sensual desires, not only to have this love for the Bridegroom but to be on fire therewith, and that with anxiety. For our sensual nature is influenced by such vehement desires, and so strongly attracted by sensible objects, that if our spiritual nature were not on fire with other and nobler anxieties for that which is spiritual—we should never overcome our natural and sensible satisfactions, nor be able to enter on the night of sense; neither should we have the courage to remain in the darkness, in the denial of every desire."

Stanza II.

"Here the soul sings of that happy lot, attained by detachment of spirit from all spiritual imperfections and selfish desires in spiritual things. This was a happiness so much the greater, because of the greatness of the difficulty which the soul had to encounter in tranquilising the house of the spiritual part, and in effecting an entrance into the interior darkness which is spiritual detachment from all things, as well sensual as spiritual, leaning only on a living faith—it is of this I speak ordinarily, because I have to do with those who are walking in the way of perfection—and by it ascending upwards unto God.

"This is here called a secret ladder, because all the steps of it are secret, hidden from sense and understanding. Thus the soul is in darkness as to all natural light of sense and understanding, going forth beyond the limits of nature and of reason, that it may ascend by this divine ladder of the faith which reaches and penetrates into the heights of God. Hence the soul is said to have gone forth in disguise, because its natural condition was divinely changed, ascending upwards by faith. And this disguise was the cause why it was unobserved, unimpeded by the things of time or reason, or by the devil himself; for none of these can hurt the soul while travelling onward by living faith. . . .

"When the soul attains to the divine union, its natural powers, impulses, and sensible anxieties in the spiritual part are at rest. It is, therefore, not said here that the soul went forth anxiously, as in the first night of sense; because the anxieties of a sensible love were necessary for a perfect departure then, so as to journey in the night of sense, and to be detached from all objects of

the same. But in order to perfect the tranquility of the house of the spirit, no more is required than the confirmation of all the powers of the soul, all its pleasures and spiritual desires, in pure faith. This done, the soul is united with the Beloved in a certain union of simplicity, pureness, love, and resemblance.

"In the first Stanza, speaking of the sensual part, the soul went forth 'in a dark night'; and here, speaking of the spiritual part, 'in darkness'; because this darkness of the spiritual part is greater, as darkness is a deeper gloom than that of the night; for, however gloomy the night may be, still something is visible, but in darkness nothing is visible. Thus, in the night of sense there remains still some light, because the understanding remains, and the reason also, which are not blind. But in this spiritual night, the night of faith, all is darkness, both in the understanding and the sense. The soul says that it went forth 'in darkness and in safety,' which it said not in the first stanza; and the reason is that the soul, when it least uses its own proper ability, travels most securely, because it walks most by faith. . . .

"'Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night showeth knowledge,' (Ps. xviii., 3). The 'day' is God in everlasting bliss, where it is perpetual day, Who communicates His Word, the Son, to the blessed angels and the holy souls who are also now 'day,' so that they may know Him and rejoice in Him. 'Night,' which is the faith in the Church militant where it is still night, showeth knowledge to the Church, and consequently to every soul which is also night, because it does not as yet enjoy the clear beatific vision; and because, in the presence of faith, its natural light is extinguished. . . .

"'Night shall be my light in my pleasures,' (Ps. cxxxviii., 11), that is, in the pleasures of pure con-

templation and union with God, the night of faith shall guide me . . . I say, then, that the soul to be rightly guided by faith to this state must be in darkness, not only as to that part thereof—the sensual and the inferior, of which I have already spoken—which regards temporal and created things; but also as to that part of which I am now speaking, which regards God and spiritual things. For it is clearly necessary for the soul, aiming at its own supernatural transformation, to be in darkness and far removed from all that relates to its natural condition, the sensual and rational parts. . . .

"Inasmuch as this union and transformation are not cognisable by sense or any human power, the soul must be completely and voluntarily empty of all that can enter into it, of every affection and inclination so far as it concerns itself. Who shall hinder God from doing His own will in a soul that is resigned, detached, self-annihilated? The soul, therefore, must be emptied of all such feelings; and, however great may be its supernatural endowments, it must be, as it were, detached from them in darkness, like a blind man leaning on the obscure faith, and taking it for its light and guide; not trusting to anything it understands, tastes, feels, or imagines—for all this is darkness which will lead it astray or keep it back; and faith is above all understanding, taste, and sense. . . .

"We must remember that in every soul, even that of the greatest sinner in the world, God dwells and is substantially present. This way of union, or presence of God in the order of nature, subsists between Him and all His creatures. By this He preserves them in being, and if He withdraws it they immediately perish and cease to be. And so when I speak of the union of the soul with God, I do not mean this substantial

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presence which is in every creature, but that union and transformation of the soul in God by love, which is only then accomplished when there subsists the likeness which love begets. For this reason shall this union be called the union of likeness, as the other is essential or substantial union. This latter one is natural; the other is supernatural, which takes effect when two wills, the will of God and the will of the soul, are conformed together, neither desiring aught repugnant to the other. Thus the soul, when it shall have driven away from itself all that is contrary to the divine will, becomes transformed in God by love . . . That soul, therefore, has greater communion with God which is most advanced in love, that is, whose will is most conformable to the will of God; and that soul which has reached perfect conformity and resemblance is perfectly united with and supernaturally transformed in God. . . .

"Having now to explain how the three powers of the soul, understanding, memory, and will, are to be brought into this spiritual night, which is the means of the divine union, it becomes necessary in the first place to discuss in this chapter (VI. of Bk. II) how the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity—through the instrumentality of which the soul is united to God in its powers—effect this emptiness and darkness, each one in its power: faith in the understanding, hope in the memory, and charity in the will. Afterwards I shall show how the understanding is made perfect in the obscurity of faith, how the memory is made empty in hope, and how also, the will is to withdraw and detach itself from every affection, that it may ascend upwards unto God. This done, we shall see clearly how necessary it is for the soul, if it will travel securely along the spiritual road, to journey in

the dark night, leaning on these three virtues which make it empty of all things and blind. For, as I have said, the soul is not united to God in this life by the understanding, or feeling, or imagination, or any other sense whatever; but only by faith, in the understanding; by hope, which may be referred to the memory—though also to the will—in so far as hope relates to that emptiness and forgetfulness of every temporal and perishable thing which it causes, the soul preserving itself entire for the supreme good which it hopes for; and by love, in the will . . .

"These three virtues render empty all the powers of the soul: faith makes the understanding empty and blind; hope takes everything away from the memory; and charity detaches the will from every pleasure or affection which is not God. Faith teaches us what the understanding cannot reach by the light of nature and of reason, being as the apostle saith, 'the substance of things to be hoped for' (Heb. xi.). And, though the understanding firmly and certainly assents to them, yet it cannot discover them; for if the understanding discovered them, there would be no room for faith. And though the understanding derives certainty from faith, yet it does not derive clearness, but rather obscurity. As to hope, there is no doubt that it renders the memory empty and brings darkness over it like a wall surrounding objects; for hope is ever conversant with that which is not in possession; for if it were already possessed, there would be no hope, because, as the apostle saith, 'hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he hope for?' (Romans, viii., 24). This virtue then makes empty also, for it is the virtue of that which is not in possession, and not of that which is. Charity, too, in the same way,

empties the will of all things; for it compels us to love God above all, which we cannot do without withdrawing our affections from every object to fix them wholly upon God. Christ, our Lord, hath said: 'Everyone of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be My desciple' (St. Luke, xiv., 33). Thus these virtues bring darkness over the soul and empty it of all things . . .

"Would that I could persuade spiritual persons that the way of God consisteth not in the multiplicity of meditations, ways of devotion or sweetness, though these may be necessary for beginners; but in one necessary thing only, in knowing how to deny themselves in earnest, inwardly and outwardly, giving themselves up to suffer for Christ's sake, and annihilating themselves utterly. He who shall exercise himself therein, will then find all this and much more. And if he be deficient at all in this exercise, which is the sum and root of all virtue, all he may do will be but beating the air—utterly profitless, notwithstanding great meditations and communications. There is no progress but in the following of Christ, Who is the way, the truth and the life. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life,' saith He, 'No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.' (St. John xiv., 6). And again: 'I am the door. By Me, if any man enter, he shall be saved.' (St. John x., 9). That spirituality, therefore, which would travel in sweetness at its ease, shunning the following of Christ, is in my opinion nothing worth . . .

"And now having said that Christ is the way, and that the way is to die to our natural self in all that relates to sense and spirit, I proceed to explain how it is to be done in imitation of Christ, for He is our light and our example. In the first place it is certain

that He died spiritually while on earth to all things belonging to sense, and naturally at death. 'The Son of Man,' saith He, 'hath not where to lay His head.' (St. Matt. vii., 20). When He died, it was the same. In the second place it is certain that at the hour of death, His soul was desolate and as it were, brought to nothing, forsaken of His Father, left without comfort in the most distressing dryness, so that He cried out on the cross: 'My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (St. Matt. xxvii., 46). This was the greatest sensible abandonment of His whole life; and it was then that He wrought the greatest work of His whole life of miracles and wonders, the reconciliation and union with God by grace of all mankind.

"This he accomplished at that very moment when He was most annihilated in all things, brought lowest in the estimation of men, for when they saw Him dying on the ignominious tree, they showed Him no reverence, yea, rather they stood by and derided Him. Then, too, was He brought lowest in His very nature; for when He died that was as it were annihilated; and as to the consolation and the protection of His Father also, for He was then forsaken that He might pay our debt to the utmost and unite us with God, being Himself annihilated and as it were brought to nothing. Therefore it is that the psalmist saith of Him 'I am brought to nothing and I knew not' (Ps. lxxii., 22). This is for the instruction of the truly spiritual man in the mystery of the gate and way of Christ, that he may become united with God; and also to teach him that the more he annihilates self for God in sense and spirit, the more will he be united with God and the greater the work he will accomplish. When he shall have been brought to nothing, when his humility it

perfect, then will take place the union of the soul and God, which is the highest and noblest estate attainable in this life. This consisteth not in spiritual refreshments, sweetness or sentiments, but in the living death of the cross, sensually and spiritually, outwardly and inwardly."

In the foregoing pages we have given, not a summary of Saint John's teaching, not a synopsis of the contents of "The Ascent of Mount Carmel," but such extracts as seemed to us to embody its main principles; and we have not touched upon that very large portion of the treatise devoted to the guidance of souls who have advanced some way along the path of contemplation. Such persons will doubtless have the work itself in their hands. We shall end by citing one most important passage from the first chapter of the third book, which treats of "the purgation and active night of the memory of the will," in which Saint John is in complete agreement with Saint Teresa.

"The spiritual man must observe this precaution: never to treasure up or retain in the memory anything he may see, hear, taste, touch, or smell; but to let them pass away, forgetting them and never reflecting upon them, unless it be necessary to do so in order to make a good meditation. But this deliberate forgetfulness, and rejection of all knowledge and of forms, must never be extended to Christ and His Sacred Humanity (Cf. Life of Saint Teresa Chs. XXII and XXIII). Sometimes indeed in the height of contemplation and pure intuition of the Divinity, the soul does not remember the Sacred Humanity; because God raises the mind to this, as it were, confused and most supernatural knowledge. But for all this, studiously to forget it is by no means right; for the contemplation of the Sacred Humanity and loving meditation on it will help us to all good;

and it is by It that we shall ascend most easily to the highest state of union. It is evident at once that while all visible and bodily things ought to be forgotten, for they are a hinderanee in our way, He Who for our salvation became man, is not to be accounted among them, for He is the truth, the door and the way, and our guide unto all good."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL.

THE stanzas upon which this treatise is a commentary are the same as those quoted at the head of the preceding chapter. These two treatises, therefore, may be looked upon as complementary to each other. The second is not an enlargement of the first. It is rather a presentation of the same truths in another way, and is more especially addressed to the director. In his valuable "Introduction" the Reverend Father Benedict Zimmerman, O.D.C., says:

"Saint John, taking his position on the firm basis of the psychology and Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and guiding himself by the light of Holy Scripture, pitilessly dissects the soul and its operations, separating not only what is dangerous or unsound, but everything that is not directly conductive to his ultimate aim, the union of the human will with the holy will of God. A work of this magnitude must be begun by God and accomplished by Him. The beginning consists in the grace of vocation, the end in the beatifice vision. Between these two there lies a vast distance which it takes a lifetime to cover, where the generous and intelligent co-operation of the soul is indispensible. This is partly active, and consists in the systematic

denial of everything that could give satisfaction to body or soul, as explained in The Ascent; and partly passive, as shown in the Dark Night, where the soul assists God's operation by submitting to His chastising hand, like a patient under the knife of the surgeon.

The number of souls called to the contemplative life in its widest sense is even nowadays greater than is commonly supposed. They are not confined to Religious Orders, but are to be found in every station of life, and in every country, for 'the Spirit breatheth where it will.' Many proceed no farther than the initial stages; few persevere as far as the spiritual night; while those who attain to perfection are but exceptions. 'Many praise and bless Jesus as long as they receive some consolation from Him, but if He hide Himself and leave them for a little while, they fall into complaining or into excessive dejection.' (Imitation II.2.) This general falling off may be partly attributed to a want of understanding and guidance which Saint John in the book before us undertakes to remedy."

Part I. treats of the Night of Sense, the imperfections of beginners, the signs and benefits of this night. The Saint says:

"That we may the better understand and explain the nature of this night through which the soul has to pass, and why God leads men into it, it may be well to touch first upon certain peculiarities of beginners . . . To show how weak are beginners in those good works which they perform with so much ease and pleasure, I proceed to explain by reference to the seven capital sins, pointing out some of the imperfections into which beginners fall in the matter of each of them. This will show us plainly how like children they are in all they do, and how great are the blessings of this dark night of

which I am about to speak, seeing that it cleanses and purifies the soul from all these imperfections . . .

Many beginners because of their inordinate appetite for spiritual sweetness, generally fall into many imperfections in the matter of anger; for when spiritual things minister to them no more sweetness and delight, they naturally become peevish, and in that bitterness of spirit prove a burden to themselves in all they do; trifles make them angry and they are at times intolerable to all about them. This happens generally after great sweetness in prayer; and so, when that sensible sweetness is past, their natural temper is soured and rendered morose. They are like a babe weaned from the breast which he found so sweet. When this natural feeling of displeasure is not permitted to grow, there is no sin but only imperfection, which will have to be purged away in the severity and aridities of the dark night. There are other spiritual persons, too, among these, who fall into another kind of spiritual anger. They are angry with other people for their faults with a sort of unquiet zeal, and watch them; they are occasionally moved to blame them, and even do so in anger, constituting themselves guardians of virtue. All this is contrary to spiritual meekness.

"Let this reference to these imperfections among the many under which they labour, who are in the first state of beginners, suffice to show them how necessary it is that God should bring them to the state of proficients, which He effects when He leads them into the dark night of which we shall now speak. In that night He weans them from the breasts of sweetness, in pure aridities and interior darkness, cleanses them from all those imperfections and childish ways, and by ways most different makes them grow in virtue. For after

all the exertions of beginners to mortify themselves in their actions and passions, their success will not be perfect, or even great, until God Himself shall do it for them in the purgation of the dark night . . .

This night—it is contemplation—produces in spiritual men two sorts of darkness or purgations, conformable to the two divisions of man's nature into sensual and spiritual. Thus the first night or sensual purgation, wherein the soul is purified or detached, will be of the senses, subjecting them to the spirit. The other is that night or spiritual purgation wherein the soul is purified and detached in the spirit, and which subdues and disposes it for union with God in love. The night of sense is common and the lot of many: these are the beginners of whom I shall first speak. The spiritual night is the portion of very few; and they are those who, exercised therein, have made some progress, of whom I shall speak hereafter. The first night, or purgation, is bitter and terrible to sense. The second is not to be compared with it; for it is much more awful to the spirit. . . .

Recollected persons enter the dark night sooner than others, after they have begun their spiritual course; because they are kept at a greater distance from the occasions of falling away, and because they correct more quickly their worldly desires, which is necessary in order to begin to enter the blessed night of sense. In general there elapses no great length of time after they have begun before they enter the night of sense; and most of them do enter it, for they generally suffer aridities. . .

But as these aridities frequently proceed, not from this night and purgation of the sensitive appetite, but from sins or imperfections, from weakness or lukewarmness, from some physical derangement or bodily indisposition,

we shall here propose certain tests by which we may ascertain whether a particular aridity proceeds from the purgation of sense, or from any one of the vices I have just enumerated. There are three chief tests for this purpose:—

The first is this: when we find no comfort in the things of God and none also in created things . . . But still as this absence of pleasure in the things of heaven and of earth may proceed from bodily indisposition, or a melancholy temperament, which frequently causes dissatisfaction with all things, the second test becomes necessary.

The second test of this purgation is that the memory dwells ordinarily upon God with a painful anxiety and carefulness; the soul thinks it is not serving God but going backwards, because it is no longer conscious of any sweetness in the things of God. In that case it is clear that this weariness of spirit and aridity are not the results of weakness and lukewarmness; for the peculiarity of lukewarmness is the want of earnestness in and of interior solicitude for the things of God . . .

The third sign we have for ascertaining whether this dryness be the purgation of sense is inability to meditate and make reflections, and to excite the imagination as before, notwithstanding all the efforts we may make; for God begins now to communicate Himself, no longer through the channel of sense as formerly, in consecutive reflections by which we arranged and divided our knowledge, but in pure spirit which admits not of successive reflections, and in the act of pure contemplation to which neither the interior nor the exterior senses of our lower nature can ascend . . .

It is expedient for the soul which is in this condition not to be troubled because its faculties have become

useless; yea, rather it should desire that they may become so quickly; for by not hindering the operation of infused contemplation to which God is now admitting it, the soul is refreshed in peaceful abundance, and set on fire with the spirit of love which this contemplation, dim and sweet, induces and establishes within it.

Still I do not mean to lay down a general rule for the cessation from meditation: that should occur when meditation is no longer feasible, and only when Our Lord, either in the way of purgation and affliction, or of the most perfect contemplation, shall make it impossible. At other times and on other occasions this help must be had recourse to, namely, meditation on the life and passion of Christ, which is the best means of purification and of patience and of security on the road, and an admirable aid to the highest contemplation. Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful and loving infusion of God, which if admitted will set the soul on fire with the spirit of love."

Part II of this treatise is devoted to the explanation of the night of the spirit, which is shown to be not only darkness but pain and torment to the soul. Its fruit, however, is most desirable, being nothing less than the infusion of Divine love.

The ten degrees of the mystic ladder of contemplation, according to Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas, are explained with admirable clearness and unction.

"On the ninth step the soul is on fire sweetly. This step is that of the perfect who burn away sweetly in God; for this sweet and delicious burning is the work of the Holy Ghost, because of the union of the soul with God. Saint Gregory says of the Apostles that they burned interiorly with love sweetly when the Holy Ghost descended upon them. The blessings and the

riches of God which the soul now enjoys cannot be described. And if we were to write many books on the subject there would still be more to say. For this reason, and because I intend to speak of it hereafter, (Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV), I shall now say no more of this step except that it is immediately followed by the tenth and last which does not belong to this life.

"On the tenth step of the ladder the soul becomes wholly assimilated unto God in the Beatific Vision which it then immediately enjoys; for having ascended in this life to the ninth, it goeth forth out of the body. For these, they are few, being perfectly purified by love, do not pass through Purgatory. For according to Saint Matthew, 'Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.' As I have said, the vision is the cause of the soul's perfect likeness unto God. 'We know,' saith Saint John, 'that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is.' (St. John iii., 2). Not that the soul shall be as great as God, for that is not possible, but inasmuch as the soul is capable of it, it will be like unto God, and so is called, and is by participation, God.

"This is the secret ladder of which the soul speaks; though in the higher steps it is no longer secret, for love reveals itself exceedingly in the great effect it produces. But on the highest step, the beatific vision, the last of the ladder, where God is leaning, nothing remains secret from the soul by reason of its perfect likeness. Therefore, our Saviour saith: 'In that day you shall not ask Me anything.' Until that day come, notwithstanding the heights to which the soul ascends, something still remains secret from it, and that in proportion to the distance from its perfect likeness to the Divine Essence.

In this way, then, by means of mystical theology and secret love, the soul goeth forth from all things and from itself, ascending upwards unto God. For love is like fire, which ever ascends hastening to be absorbed in the centre of its sphere."

In the twenty-first chapter, Saint John explains the meaning of the word "disguised" as applied to the soul going forth by the secret ladder. One would like to quote the entire chapter as an illustration of the wonderful blend of learning and piety, of knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and their application to mystical theology, of depth of thought and clearness in expressing it, characteristic of the Saint. We must content ourselves with four or five paragraphs:

"For the understanding of the whole matter it is necessary to keep in mind, that to be disguised is nothing else but to hide oneself under another form than our own; either for the purpose of showing, under that concealment, the will and purpose of the heart, with a view to gaining the goodwill and affection of the person beloved; or for the purpose of escaping the observation of rivals, and thereby better effecting our object. Such a person assumes the disguise which shall most represent and manifest the affection of his heart, and which shall best conceal him from his rivals.

"The soul, then, touched with the love of its Bridegroom, Christ, that it may gain His favour and goodwill, sallies forth in that disguise which shall most vividly represent the affection of the mind, and secure it against the assaults of its enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh. The disguise it assumes is, therefore, a garment of three principal colours, white, green, and purple, emblems of the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity; by the help of which it shall not only enter into

the good graces of the Beloved, but shall also be most secure and protected against its three enemies.

"Faith is a garment of such surpassing whiteness as to dazzle the eyes of every understanding; for when the soul has put on faith it becomes invisible and inaccessible to the devil, because it is then most securely defended against him, its strongest and most cunning foe.

"Saint Peter knew of no better defence against the devil than faith, for he said; 'whom resist ye, strong in faith.' (1st St. Peter, v., 9). And with a view of entering into favour and union with the Beloved, the soul cannot put on a better garment, as the ground of the other virtues, than the white tunic of faith; for without it, as the Apostle saith, 'It is impossible to please God.' (Heb. xi., 6). But with a living faith the soul cannot but be pleasing and acceptable to God, for He says so Himself by the mouth of the prophet: 'I will espouse thee to Me in faith.' (Osee ii., 20). It is as if He said to the soul: 'If thou wilt be united and betrothed to Me, thou must draw near inwardly clad in faith.'

"The soul put on the white robe of faith on its going forth on this dark night, when walking in the darkness amidst interior trials it received no ray of light from the understanding; not from above, because heaven seemed shut and God hidden; not from below, because its spiritual directors gave it no comfort. It bore its trials patiently and persevered, without fainting or falling away from the Beloved, who by these crosses and tribulations tried the faith of His bride, that it might be able to say with the Psalmist: 'For the words of Thy Lips I have kept hard ways.' (Ps. xvi., 4.)

"Over the white robe of faith the soul puts on forthwith that of the second colour, a green coat, emblem of the virtue of hope, by which it is delivered and protected

from its second enemy, the world. The freshness of a living hope in God fills the soul with such energy and resolution, with such aspirations after the things of eternal life that all this world seems to it—as indeed it is—in comparison with that which it hopes for, dry, withered, dead, and worthless. The green vesture of hope—for the soul is then ever looking upward unto God, disregarding all else and delighting only in Him—is so pleasing to the Beloved that the soul obtains from Him all it hopes for . . . .

"Over the white and green robes, as the crown and perfection of its disguise, the soul puts on the third, the splendid robe of purple. This is the emblem of charity, which not only enhances the beauty of the others, but which so elevates the soul and renders it so pleasing and lovely in His eyes that it ventures to say to Him: 'I am black but beautiful . . .' (Cant. i., 4.) This robe of charity, which is that of love not only defends and protects the soul from its third enemy, the flesh—for where the true love of God is, there is no room for self-love or selfishness—but strengthens the other virtues also, and makes them flourish for the protection of the soul, beautifying it and adorning it with grace, so that it shall please the Beloved."

In the twenty-fifth and last chapter of the second part of the treatise, the third stanza of the poem which forms the text is briefly explained, the soul continuing under the metaphor of the natural night to celebrate and magnify the blessings of the night of the Spirit. The day is about to dawn; and Saint John wrote no commentary on the five remaining stanzas, unless indeed it was afterwards destroyed or lost, but his third and fourth treatises amply supply this deficiency.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE OF THE SOUL AND THE BRIDEGROOM CHRIST.

COMPOSED by the Saint in his prison cell in the monastery of the Mitigation in Toledo. The Commentary was written at the request of the Venerable Anne of Jesus. In his Prologue, Saint John says: "The stanzas that follow, having been written under the influence of that love which proceeds from the overflowing mystical intelligence, cannot be fully explained. Indeed I do not purpose any such thing, for my sole object is to throw some general light over them, which in my opinion is the better course. It is better to leave the outpourings of love in their own fulness, that everyone may apply them according to the measure of his spirit and power, than to pare them down to one particular sense which is not suited to the taste of everyone. And though I do put forth a particular explanation, still others are not to be bound by it. The mystical wisdom—that is, the love of which these stanzas speak—does not require to be distinctly understood in order to produce the effect of love and tenderness in the soul, for it is in this respect like faith, by which we love God without a clear apprehension of Him."

These stanzas," says the Saint in his Argument, "describe the career of a soul from its first entrance on

the service of God till it comes to the final state of perfection—the spiritual marriage. They refer accordingly to the three states or ways of the spiritual training—the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways, some properties and effects of which they explain.

A. STANZA REFERRING:—

(*a*) to the PURGATIVE WAY ... (I. to V.)
(*b*) to the ILLUMINATED WAY (V. to XII.)

I. TO XII. (INCLUSIVE).

STANZA I. (The Bride)

Where hast Thou hidden Thyself
Beloved, and why hast Thou abandoned me to my sighs?
As the hart Thou didst fly away,
When Thou hadst wounded me;
I ran after Thee, calling upon Thee, but Thou wert gone.

"It is as if the soul said, 'Show me, O Thou the Word, my Bridegroom, the place where Thou art hidden.' It asks for the revelation of the Divine Essence; for the place where the Son of God is hidden, is, according to Saint John, 'the Bosom of the Father.' St. John 1.18) . . . We must remember that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost is hidden in essence and in presence in the inmost being of the soul. That soul, therefore, that will find Him must go out from all things in will and affection, and enter into the profoundest self-recollection, and all things must be to it as if they existed not . . . Courage then, O soul most beautiful, thou knowest now that thy Beloved, Whom thou desirest, dwelleth hidden within thy breast. Strive, therefore, to be truly hidden with Him, and be conscious, of His presence with loving affection . . .

STANZA II.

O shepherds, you who go
Through the sheepcots up the hill,
If by good hap you see
Him Whom I love,
Tell Him I languish, I suffer, and I die.

The shepherds are the affections, and desires, and groanings of the soul; for they feed it with spiritual good things. A shepherd is one who feeds, and by means of such, God communicates Himself to the soul, and feeds it in the divine pastures; for without these groans He communicates but slightly with it . . . The shepherds are also the angels who not only carry our petitions to God, but also bring down the graces of God to our souls, feeding them like good shepherds with the most sweet communications and inspirations of God Who employs them in that ministry. They also protect us and defend us against the wolves, which are the evil spirits.

STANZA III.

In search of my Love
I will go over the mountains and strands;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts;
And I will pass by the mighty and over the frontiers.

Mountains, which are lofty, signify virtues, partly on account of their height and partly on account of the toil and labour of ascending them; the soul says it will ascend to them in the practice of the contemplative life. Strands, which are low, signify mortifications, penances, and spiritual exercises; and the soul will add the active life to that of contemplation; for both are necessary in seeking after God and in acquiring virtue. The soul says in effect: 'In searching after my Beloved, I will practice great virtue, and abase myself by lowly mortifi-

cations and acts of humility; for the way to seek God is to do good works in Him and to mortify the evil in ourselves . . .

STANZA IV.

O groves and thickets
Planted by the hand of the Beloved,
O meadows ever verdant
Enamelled with flowers,
Tell me has He passed by you.

In this stanza the soul begins to advance through consideration and knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of the Beloved, their Creator . . . The groves are the elements earth, water, air and fire. As the most pleasant groves are studded with plants and shrubs, so the elements are thick with creatures, and are here called thickets because of the number and variety of creatures in each . . . The 'meadows ever verdant' are the heavens; for the things which He hath created in the heavens are of incorruptible freshness, which neither perish nor wither with time, where the just are refreshed as in the green pastures . . . The flowers are the angels and the saints who adorn and beautify that place, as costly and fine enamel on a vase of pure gold . . .

STANZA V. (Answer of the creatures).

A thousand graces diffusing,
He passed the groves in haste,
And merely by regarding them,
(By turning His face to them) as He passed,
He clothed them with His beauty.

God created all things with great ease and rapidity, and left in them some tokens of Himself, not only by creating them out of nothing, but also by endowing them with innumerable graces and qualities.

STANZA VI. (The Bride).

Alas, who can heal me?
End by giving Thyself to me perfectly,
Ah, do not send me,
Hence-forward, any messenger
Who cannot tell me what I seek to know.

O, Lord, my Bridegroom, Who didst give Thyself partially before, give me Thyself wholly now. Thou Who didst show glimpses of Thyself before, show Thyself clearly now. Thou Who didst communicate Thyself hitherto by the instrumentality of messengers, give Thyself by Thyself now . . . I wish for Thee wholly, and Thy messengers neither know Thee wholly, nor can they speak of Thee wholly; for there is nothing on earth or in heaven that can furnish to the soul that knowledge for which it longs.

STANZA VII.

All they who serve
Making known to me of Thee a thousand graces,
All wound me more and more;
And that which leaves me dying
Is something—I know not what—of which they are
stammering.

One of the greatest favours of God, bestowed transiently in this life, is to enable the soul to see so distinctly, and to feel so profoundly, that it clearly understands it cannot comprehend Him at all. These souls are herein, in some degree, like the saints in heaven, where they who know Him most perfectly perceive most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible; for those who have the less clear vision, do not perceive so distinctly as the others, how greatly He transcends their vision. This is clear to none who have not had experience of it. But the experienced soul,

comprehending that there is something further of which it is profoundly sensible, calls it 'I know not what.' As that cannot be understood, so neither can it be described, though it be felt, as I have said. Hence the soul says that creatures speak indistinctly, because they cannot distinctly utter that which they would say: it is the speech of infants who cannot explain distinctly or speak intelligibly that which they would convey to others.

STANZA VIII.

But how canst thou persevere,
O life, not living where thy true life is;
And when in striking they would cause thy death,
Those arrows thou receivest
From thy conceptions of the Beloved.

The soul lives there where it loves, rather than in the body which it animates. The soul does not live by the body; but, on the contrary, gives it life, and lives by love in that which it loves. For besides this life of love which it lives in God Who loves it, the soul has its radical and natural life in God, like all created things, according to the saying of Saint Paul: 'In Him we live, and move, and are,' (Acts xvii., 28).

STANZA IX.

Why since Thou hast wounded
This heart, hast Thou not healed it?
And since Thou hast stolen it from me,
Why dost Thou abandon it?
And why neglect to carry off the booty?

The soul, seeing itself wounded and lonely, as no one can heal it but the Beloved Who has wounded it, asks why He, having wounded its heart with that love which the knowledge of Him brings, does not heal it in the vision of His presence; and why He thus abandons the

heart which He has stolen by means of the love which inflames it, after having deprived the soul of all power over it. The soul has now no power over its heart—for he who loves has none—because it is surrendered to the Beloved; and yet He has not taken it to Himself in the pure and perfect transformation of love in glory . . . Whether God has really stolen the heart, the soul may ascertain by either of these two questions: Is it anxiously seeking after God? Has it no pleasure in anything but in Him?

STANZA X.

Quench Thou my troubles,
For no one else can soothe them;
And let mine eyes behold Thee,
For Thou art their light,
And I will keep them for Thee alone.

The desire of love has this property, that everything said or done, which does not become that which the will loves, wearies and annoys it, and makes it peevish when it sees itself disappointed in its desires. This and its weary longing after the vision of God is here called 'troubles.' These troubles nothing can remove except the possession of the Beloved; hence the soul prays Him to quence them with His presence; to cool their feverishness, as the cooling water, him who is wearied by the heat. The soul makes use of the expression 'quench' to denote its sufferings from the fire of love.

STANZA XI.

Reveal Thy presence
And let the vision of Thy beauty slay me;
Consider that the malady
Of love, cannot be cured
But in Thy presence and before Thy face.

In other diseases, according to sound philosophy,

contraries are cured by contraries; but love is not cured but by that which is in harmony with itself. The health of the soul consists in the love of God . . . the more its love increases the greater will be its health; and when its love is perfect then, too, its health is perfect. Love is not perfect until the lovers become so on an equality as to be mutually transformed into one another: then love is wholly perfect.

STANZA XII.

O crystal spring!
O that on thy silvered surface
Thou wouldst mirror forth at once
Those eyes so longed for,
Which are outlined in my heart.

The soul vehemently desiring to be united to the Bridegroom, and seeing that there is no help or succour in created things, turns towards the faith, as to that which gives it the most vivid vision of the Beloved, and adopts it as the means to that end . . . As the faith gives and communicates to us God Himself, but hidden beneath the silver of faith, yet it reveals Him none the less. So if a man gives us a vessel made of gold, but covered with silver, he gives us none less a vessel of gold . . . The 'silvered surface' means the definition of faith. The 'eyes,' the divine truths infused into the soul by faith, said to be 'outlined' because the knowledge of them is not perfect.

B. Stanzas Referring to the Unitive Way when the Union is Transient—Spiritual Betrothal.

XIII.—XXI. (inclusive).

Stanza XIII. (The Bride).

Turn them away Beloved!
For behold, I take my flight.

(The Bridegroom).

Return, My dove,
For the wounded hart
Looms on the hill
In the breeze of thy flight and is refreshed thereby.

The soul prays the Beloved to turn away His eyes (*i.e.* those glimpses of His Godhead which He has begun to reveal) and not to show them in the body where it cannot enjoy them as it would, but to show them to it in its flight from the body. The Bridegroom at once denies the request and hinders the flight saying, 'Return my dove, for the communications I make to thee now are not those of the state of glory wherein thou desirest to be; but return to Me, for I am He Whom thou, wounded with love, art seeking; and I, too, as the hart, wounded with thy love, begin to show Myself to thee on the heights of contemplation, and am refreshed and delighted by the love which thy contemplation involves.'

Stanza XIV. and XV. (The Bride).

My Beloved is to me the mountains,
The solitary wooded valleys,
The unknown islands,
The roaring torrents,
The whisper of the caressing airs,
The tranquil night

At the first streaks of dawn,
The silent music,
The harmonious solitude,
The supper which recreates and inflames with love.

The spiritual flight (Stanza XIII.) signifies a certain high estate and union of love, whereunto, after many spiritual exercises, God is wont to elevate the soul: it is called the spiritual betrothal of the Word the Son of God. In the beginning when this occurs the first time God reveals to it great things of Himself, makes it beautiful in majesty and grandeur, adorns it with graces and gifts, endows it with honour and with the knowledge of Himself, as a bride is adorned on the day of her betrothal. On this happy day the soul not only ceases from its anxieties and loving complaints but is, moreover, adorned with all grace, entering into a state of peace and delight, and of the sweetness of love, as it appears from these stanzas, in which it does nothing else but recount and praise the magnificence of the Beloved, which it recognises in Him and enjoys in the union of the betrothal.

STANZA XVI.

Catch us the foxes,
For our vineyard hath flourished;
While of roses
We make a coneshaped nosegay
And let no one appear on the hill.

The soul addresses itself to the angels whose function it is to succour it at this time by putting the evil spirits to flight . . . Then the soul binds all its virtues together, makes acts of love in each of them separately and in all together, and then offers them all to the Beloved with great tenderness of love and sweetness; and in this the Beloved helps it . . . A cone is strong, containing many

pieces firmly joined together, so this cone-like nosegay is the uniform perfection of the soul which contains many perfections, great virtues and rich endowments.

STANZA XVII.

Cease O North wind that slayest,
Come, South wind, that awakenest love,
Blow through my garden,
And shed around its perfumes,
And the Beloved shall feed among the flowers.

The soul shuts the door against the North wind of spiritual aridity by unceasing prayer and devotion; it then invokes the Holy Ghost to breathe through it, that is, not to breathe into it new virtues, but to touch and move those already possessed in such a way as to send forth their marvellous fragrance and sweetness. It is not said that the Beloved shall feed on the flowers but among the flowers. What He feeds on is the soul, which He transformed into Himself, not that it is prepared and adorned with these flowers of virtues, graces, and perfections which are the things whereby and among which He feeds.

STANZA XVIII.

O nymphs of Judea!
While among the flowers and rosebushes
The amber sends forth its perfume,
Tarry in the suburbs
And touch not our threshold.

The amber is the divine Spirit of the Bridegroom dwelling in the soul whose rational and higher part may be called the city; while the lower part is called the suburbs or Judea, because carnal and blind like the Jews. The nymphs are the forms and images by which sensuality stirs up concupiscence. The soul bids the

nymphs to remain in the sensual part and not to let even their first movements touch the higher part, not to cross the threshold by passing into the reason and will.

STANZA XIX.

Hide Thyself, O my Beloved !
Turn Thy face to the Mountains
Do not speak,
Rather look upon the companions
Of her who is travelling among strange islands.

The bride begs that her Spouse would converse secretly with her in the innermost part of her soul, filling her faculties (the mountains) with the glory and excellence of His Divinity. She asks to see the face of God, which is the essential communication of His Divinity to the soul, without any intervening medium, by a certain knowledge thereof which is something beyond sense, the contact of pure substances, that is, of the soul and the Divinity. The companions are the many virtues of the soul, its gifts, perfections, and other spiritual graces with which God has endowed it ; the pledges, presents and tokens of its betrothal. The strange islands signify the knowledge which is unknown to sense and to the ordinary perceptions of nature.

STANZAS XX. and XXI. (The Bridegroom).

Light-winged birds,
Lions, fawns, bounding does,
Mountains, valleys, strands,
Waters, winds, heat,
And terrors of the sleepless nights ;
By the sweet-sounding lyres,
And the song of the sirens, I adjure you,
Let your fury cease,
And touch not the walls,
That the bride may sleep in greater security.

The 'light-winged birds' signify the flights of imagination which distract and weary the soul; the 'lions' symbolise the bold and daring acts of the irascible faculty; the 'fawns and bounding does,' the concupiscible faculty or power of desire, the qualities of which are timidity and rashness. The 'mountains, valleys, and strands' typify the vicious and disorderly notions of the memory, understanding, and will: the 'mountains' those acts which are vicious by excess; the 'valleys,' those that fail by defect; the 'strands,' not perfectly level, those acts that tend to one or other extreme. The 'waters, winds, heat and the terrors' are the affections of grief, hope, joy, and fear which afflict the soul. The Bridegroom commands all these vain distractions, these violent acts, these importunate desires, and all the trouble caused by the passions to cease.

All these passions and faculties are comprehended under the expressions employed in the first stanza, the operations of which, full of trouble, the Bridegroom subdues by that great sweetness, joy, and courage, which the bride enjoys in the spiritual surrender of Himself to her, which God makes at this time. Under its influence, because God transforms the soul effectually in Himself, all the faculties, desires, and movements of the soul lose their natural imperfection and become divine.

C. Stanzas Relating to the Perfection of the Unitive Way, when the Union is Habitual—Spiritual Marriage—XXII to XXXV.

Stanza XXII. (The Bridegroom).

The Bride has entered
Into the enchanting garden of her desire,
And there she reposes to her heart's content;
Her neck reclining
On the sweet arms of the Beloved.

The Spiritual Marriage of the soul with the Son of God is beyond all comparison a far higher state than that of betrothal, because it is a complete transformation into the Beloved . . . It is of this state the Bridegroom is now speaking, saying 'The Bride has entered'; that is out of all temporal and natural things, out of all spiritual affections, ways and methods, having left on one side and forgotten all temptations, trials, sorrows, anxieties, and cares; transformed in God Who is called 'the enchanting garden,' because of the delicious and sweet repose which the soul finds in Him . . . This reclining of the neck on the arms of God is the union of the soul's strength, or, rather, of the soul's weakness, with the strength of God.

Stanza XXIII.

Beneath the apple-tree,
There wert thou betrothed to Me;
There I gave thee My hand,
And thou wert redeemed
Where thy mother was corrupted.

As it was by the forbidden tree of Paradise that our nature was corrupted in Adam and lost, so it was by the tree of the Cross that it was redeemed and restored. The Bridegroom then stretched forth the hand of His grace and mercy in His death and passion.

STANZA XXIV. (The Bride).

Our bed is of flowers,
By dens of lions encompassed,
Hung with purple,
Made in peace,
And crowned with a thousand shields of gold.

The soul is admitted to a knowledge of the wisdom, secrets and graces, gifts and powers of God, whereby it is made so beautiful, so rich, so abounding in delights, that it seems to be lying on a bed of many-coloured divine flowers, the touch of which makes it thrill with joy, and the odours of which refresh it . . . Each virtue of the soul in a state of perfection is like a den of lions, where Christ dwells united to the soul in that virtue, and in every one of them as strong as a lion. The soul also, united to Him in those very virtues, is as a strong lion because it then partakes of the perfections of God.

STANZA XXV.

In Thy footsteps
The young run hither and thither along Thy way;
At the touch of the spark,
And by the spiced wine,
They give forth divine balsam.

The sweetness and knowledge or Himself, which God communicates to the soul that seeks Him, are as footsteps by which it traces Him. Devout souls run (as it were) with youthful vigour, each according to the spirit which God bestows and the vocation He has given, in the diversified forms of the spiritual service in the road of everlasting life. Lines 3, 4, and 5, refer to interior acts of the will which result from that most delicate touch of the Beloved which the soul feels at times even when least expecting it, and which sets the heart on fire with love, as if a spark of fire had fallen upon it. The

spiced wine is that exceeding great grace of love which God sometimes bestows on advanced souls. The divine balsam signifies the praise and thanksgiving and burning worship given out by the soul.

STANZA XXVI.

In the innermost cellar
Of my Beloved have I drunk; and when I went forth
Over all the plain
I knew nothing,
And I had lost the flock I followed before.

The cellar is the highest degree of love to which a soul may attain in this life, entered by few in this world, because therein is wrought the perfect union with God, the spiritual marriage . . . As a draught diffuses itself through all the members and veins of the body, so this communication of God diffuses itself substantially in the whole soul, or rather the soul is tranformed in God . . . This draught of God's most deep wisdom makes the soul forget all the things of this world.

STANZA XXVII.

There He gave me His heart,
There He taught me the science full of sweetness;
And there I gave to Him
Myself without reserve;
There I promised to be His bride.

This science is mystical theology, which is the secret science of God, and which spiritual men call contemplation. It is most full of sweetness, because it is knowledge by love.

STANZA XXVIII.

My soul is occupied
And all my substance in His service;
Now I guard no flock,
Nor have I any other employment;
My sole occupation is love.

The bride, having given herself wholly to the Bridegroom, recounts to the Beloved how she fulfils her task. 'My soul and body,' she says, 'all my abilities and all my capacities, are occupied not with other matters, but with those pertaining to the service of the Bridegroom.' She is therefore not seeking her own satisfaction, nor the gratification of her own inclinations, neither does she occupy herself in anything whatever which is alien to God; yea, even her communion with God Himself is nothing else but acts of love.

STANZA XXIX.

If then on the common
I am no longer seen or met with,
Say that I am lost,
That walking as one enamoured
I willingly lost myself; and yet was found.

The soul says to the worldly-minded: 'If you see me no more where I used to be before I gave myself up wholly to God, look upon me as lost, and say so . . . If you see me no longer occupied with the subjects that engrossed me once, with the pastimes of the world, say and believe that I am lost to them, and a stranger to them; yea, that I am lost of my own choice, seeking my Beloved Whom I so greatly loved.

STANZA XXX.

Of emeralds and of flowers
Culled in the freshness of the morning,
We will make the garlands
Blossoming in Thy love
And bound together with one hair of my head.

The 'emeralds' are the gifts of God to the soul; the 'flowers' are the virtues it has acquired. By the 'freshness of the morning' we may understand (1) Youth,

(2) good works wrought in seasons of spiritual dryness hardness, the winter morning (old age). The 'hair' is the will of the soul, and the love it bears to the Bridegroom.

STANZA XXXI.

By that one hair
Which Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck,
Which on my neck Thou hast regarded,
Thou hast been captivated,
And by one of my eyes Thou hast been wounded.

There are three things mentioned here. The first is, that the hair by which the virtues are bound together is nothing less than a strong love; for in truth it need be so in order to preserve them. The second is, that God is greatly taken by this hair of love, seeing it to be alone and strong. The third is, that God is deeply enamoured of the soul, beholding the purity and integrity of its faith.

STANZA XXXII.

When Thou didst look lovingly upon me,
Thine eyes imprinted in me Thy grace;
For this Thou didst love me again,
And thereby mine eyes did merit
To adore what in Thee they beheld.

In the two foregoing stanzas, the bride seems to attribute something to herself. Now she explains her meaning, refers all to God and at the same time gives Him thanks, saying that the cause of His being the captive of the hair of her love, and of His being wounded by the eye of her faith, was His mercy in looking divinely upon her, thereby rendering her lovely and pleasing in His sight.

STANZA XXXIII.

Despise me not,
For if formerly I was black before Thee,
Now Thou mayest well look lovingly upon me;
For since Thou hast so looked upon me,
Grace and beauty Thou hast given me.

If before, the soul deserved contempt because of the filthiness of its sin, and the meanness of its nature, now that He once looked upon it, and thereby adorned it with grace and beauty. He may well look upon it a second time and increase its grace and beauty.

STANZA XXXIV. (The Bridegroom).

The little white dove
Has returned to the ark with the bough:
And now the turtle-dove
Its desired mate
On the green banks has found.

The Bridegroom celebrates the purity of the soul in its present state, the rich rewards it has gained in having prepared itself, and laboured to come to Him. He also speaks of its blessedness in having found the Bridegroom in this union, and of the fulfilment of all its desires.

STANZA XXXV.

In solitude she lived,
And in solitude she now has built her nest,
In solitude He guided her,
He alone, her Beloved,
Himself also in solitude, wounded with her love.

The soul in solitude, detached from all things, having now ascended above all things, nothing now can profit or help it to ascend higher except the Bridegroom Word Himself, Who, because enamoured of the bride, will Himself bestow these graces on the soul.

D.—Stanzas Referring to Union in Future Life of Beatitude xxxvi. to End of Poem.

Stanza XXXVI. (The Bride).

Let us rejoice, O my Beloved,
Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty
To the mountain and the hill,
Where the pure water flows ;
Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.

The soul asks: (1) for the joy and the sweetness of love; (2) to be made like the Beloved, so that being alike in beauty, they may both see themselves in that beauty; (3) to be admitted to the knowledge of His secrets, by entering into the "thicket" of trials and tribulations, even the anguish of death, the only means of entering into the thicket of the manifold riches of the wisdom of God.

Stanza XXXVII.

And then at once we shall go
To the deep caverns of the rock
Which are all secret ;
Therein we shall enter together
And taste the new wine of the pomegranates.

"This rock is Christ." (1 Cor. x., 4). The "deep caverns" are the sublime mysteries of the wisdom of God in Christ, in the hypostatical union of the human nature with the Divine Word; in the correspondence with it of the union of man with God; and in the agreement of God's justice and mercy in the salvation of mankind. The "wine of the pomegranates" is the fruition and joy of the love of God which overflows the soul in the understanding and knowledge of His mysteries.

STANZA XXXVIII.

There Thou wilt show to me
That which my soul desires;
And at once Thou wilt bestow upon me
There, O Thou my life,
What Thou gavest me the other day.

The bride does not say "There wilt Thou give me Thy love," though that is true—for that means only that God will love her—but that there He will show her how she is to love Him with that perfection at which she aims, because there in giving her His love He will at the same time show her how to love Him as He loves her. For God not only teaches the soul to love Himself purely, with a disinterested love, as He hath loved us, but He also enables it to love Him with that strength with which He loves the soul.

What He will give is the essential glory which consists in the Vision of God, to which He predestined the soul in that day of eternity which is 'other' than the day of time.

STANZA XXXIX.

The breathing of the air,
The song of the sweet nightingale,
The grove and its graces,
In the night serene
With the flame which consumes, yet gives no pain.

The soul refers here under five different expressions, to that which the Bridegroom is to give it in the beatific transformation:—1. The aspiration of the Holy Spirit of God after it, and its own aspiration after God. 2. Joyous praise of God in the fruition of Him. 3. The knowledge of creatures and the order of them. 4. The pure and clear contemplation of the divine essence. 5. Perfect transformation in the infinite love of God.

STANZA XL.

No one beheld it
Neither did Aminadab appear.
The siege was intermitted
And the cavalry dismounted
At the sight of the waters.

The soul puts before the Bridegroom four considerations in order to move Him to set it free from earth and admit it to heaven: 1. It is so detached, so recollected in God, that nothing can come within sight of its intimate joy. 2. It is so strong, so defended by God's right hand, that Aminadab (Satan) does not venture to approach it. 3. The siege—the passions and desires which surround the soul—is intermitted, because the passions are subject to reason and the desires mortified. 4. The cavalry (interior and exterior senses) dismount, or are refreshed by a certain overflowing of the spirit, which attracts them towards that interior recollection where the soul is drinking the waters of the spiritual blessings.

All these perfections and dispositions of the soul, the bride sets forth before her Beloved, the Son of God; longing at the same time to be translated by Him out of the spiritual marriage, to which God has been pleased to advance her in the Church militant to the glorious marriage of the Church triumphant.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

THE poem was written after the escape of Saint John of the Cross from his prison in the monastery of Toledo; the commentary on it, some years later, at the request of one of his penitents, Dona Ana de Peñalosa.

In his Prologue the Saint says: "In the former stanzas (A Spiritual Canticle) I spoke of the highest degree of perfection to which it is possible to attain in this life, transformation in God; yet these, the explanation of which I now propose to undertake, speak of that love still more perfect and complete in the same state of transformation. For though it is true that the former and the present stanzas refer to one and the same state of transformation, and that no soul can pass beyond it as such, still with time and habits of devotion, the soul is more perfected and grounded in it. Thus when a log of wood is set on fire, and when it is transformed into fire and united with it, the longer it burns, and the hotter the fire, the more it glows until sparks and flames are emitted from it. So too, the soul when transformed and glowing interiorly in the fire of love, is not only united with the divine fire but becomes a living flame and itself conscious of it."

In his introduction to the fourth volume of the Works

of Saint John of the Cross, Father Benedict Zimmerman, O.D.C., throws the clearest light on this passage: "It would be a mistake," he writes, "to think that the point reached in the 'Spiritual Canticle' marks the limits of the soul's potentialities, and that, having reached this, nothing remains to be done but to rest and enjoy the gain. Not only has the soul now a wider scope for exterior work, being a perfect instrument in the hands of a perfect artist, but even its interior work or its co-operation with God must not cease for one moment. There must be no relaxation in self-denial. Though it be true that the preservation of a habit is easier than the acquiring thereof, there is great danger that slight neglect might lead to the loss of habitual self-renunciation. To this end the grace of perseverance is indispensable. Saint Paul says: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii., 12). Nor are the trials peculiar to this stage lighter than those proper for the time of purgation although they differ in kind. For there they served for the purpose of penance and mortification, while here they are a participation in the Passion of our Lord. "But if you partake in the sufferings of Christ," says Saint Peter, "rejoice, that when His glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy." (1st St. Pet. iv., 13). Hence the hunger and thirst for crosses and trials and ignominy for which many saints were remarkable. Saint Teresa had reached the state described in the Seventh Mansion of the "Interior Castle" (which corresponds to that pictured in the Living Flame of Love) in 1577; and soon afterwards she told one of her companions that she did not consider it possible to advance further in this life in the

way of prayer, nor even to wish to do so. Yet the remaining five years of life brought her trials, compared with which those of the earlier years were but as child's play. Saint John of the Cross is another instance. When writing the explanation of the "Living Flame of Love" he certainly recorded his own experiences. Yet the keenest sufferings, particularly that of being "despised," especially by those to whose respect he was entitled in the highest degree, were reserved for the last years of his life. So far from striking an insensible, stoic soul, these tribulations are the lot of the most refined, and therefore the most sensitive hearts which revel in sufferings for the sake of the sponsus sanguinum. (Exod. iv., 25)."

STANZA I.

O Living Flame of Love,
That woundest tenderly
My soul in its inmost depth!
As thou art no longer grievous,
Perfect thy work, if it be thy will,
Break the web of this sweet encounter.

"Setting aside the signification of depth, material and measurable, we say that the inmost depth of the soul is there where its being, power and the force of its action and movement penetrate and cannot go further. Thus fire, or a stone, tends each by its natural force to the centre of its sphere, and cannot go beyond it, or help resting there, unless some obstacle intervene. The centre of the soul is God. The cry of the soul then is: O kindling, burning love, how tenderly dost thou make me glorious by thy loving movements in my greatest power and strength, giving me a divine intelligence according to the capacity of my under-

standing, and communicating love according to the utmost freedom of my will; that is, thou hast elevated to the greatest height, by the divine intelligence, the powers of my understanding in the most intense fervour and substantial union of my will. This ineffable effect takes place when this flame of fire rushes upwards in the soul. The divine wisdom absorbs the soul—which is now purified and most clean—profoundly and sublimely in itself: for 'wisdom reacheth everywhere by reasons of her purity'."

STANZA II.

O sweet burn!
O delicious wound!
O tender hand! O gentle touch!
Savouring of everlasting life,
And paying the whole debt,
In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.

"It is the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who accomplish the divine work of union in the soul. The 'hand,' the 'touch,' and the 'burn,' are in substance one and the same; and the three terms are employed because they express effects peculiar to each. The 'burn' is the Holy Ghost; the 'hand' is the Father; and the 'touch' is the Son. Thus the soul magnifies the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, extolling those three grand gifts which They perfect within it, in that they have changed death into life, transforming it in themselves.

The first of these gifts is the delicious wound attributed to the Holy Ghost, and so the soul calls it the 'burn.' The second is the 'taste of everlasting life,' attributed to the Son, and the soul calls it the 'gentle touch.' The third is that gift which is the

perfect recompense of the soul, attributed to the Father, and is therefore called the 'tender hand.' Though the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity are referred to severally because of the operations peculiar to Each, the soul is addressing itself to but One Essence, saying 'Thou hast changed it into life,' for the Three Divine Persons work together, and the whole is attributed to Each and to All.

By 'death,' here, is meant the old man, that is the employment of our faculties, memory, understanding, and will, upon the things of this world, and the desire on the pleasure which created things supply. All this is the old life; it is the death of the new life which is spiritual, and which the soul cannot live perfectly unless to the old man it is perfectly dead; for so the apostle teaches, when he bids us put 'away, according to the old conversation, the old man . . . and put on the new man, which, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of the truth,' (Ephes. iv., 22, 24). In this new life, when the soul shall have attained perfect union with God, all its affections, powers, and acts, in themselves imperfect and vile, become as it were divine. And as everything that lives, to use the expression of the philosophers, lives in its acts, so the soul, having its acts in God by virtue of its union with Him, lives the life of God, its death being changed into life.

The substance of the soul, though it is not the substance of God, because inconvertible into Him, yet being united to Him and absorbed in Him, is by participation God . . . The soul has therefore good reason for saying with Saint Paul 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.' (Gal. ii.. 20). What in the soul is dead and cold becomes changed into the life of God . . . In this state of life, so perfect, the soul is,

as it were, keeping a perpetual feast with the praises of God in its mouth, with a new song of joy and love, full of the knowledge of its high dignity."

STANZA III.

O lamps of fire,
In the splendours of which
The deep caverns of sense,
Dim and dark,
With unwonted brightness
Give light and warmth to their Beloved.

"The 'caverns' are the powers of the soul—memory, understanding, and will—and their depth is commensurate with their capacity for great good, because nothing less than the infinite can fill them. What they suffer when they are empty, shows in some measure the greatness of their delight when they are full of God; for contraries are known by contraries. In the first place it is to be remembered that these caverns are not conscious of their extreme emptiness, when they are not purified and cleansed from all affection for created things. In this life every trifle that enters them is enough to perplex them, to render them insensible to their loss, and unable to recognise the infinite good which is wanting or their own capacity for it. It is assuredly a most wonderful thing how, notwithstanding their capacity for infinite good, a mere trifle perplexes them, so that they cannot become the recipients of that for which they are intended, till they are completely emptied.

As to the first cavern, which is the understanding, its emptiness is the thirst after God. So great is this thirst that the Psalmist compares it to that of the hart, for he knew of none greater saying, 'As the hart desireth the fountains of water: so doth my soul desire Thee, O God.'

(Ps. xli. 2.) This thirst is a thirst for the waters of the divine Wisdom, the object of the understanding. The second cavern is the will, and the emptiness thereof is a hunger so great after God, that the soul faints away, as the Psalmist saith, 'My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.' (Ps. lxxxiii., 3). This hunger is for the perfection of love, the object of the soul's desires. The third cavern is the memory, and the emptiness thereof is the soul's melting away and languishing for the possession of God. 'I will be mindful and remember,' saith Jeremias, 'and my soul shall languish within me: these things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope.' (Lam. iii., 20, 21).

"The 'Lamps' are the Divine Attributes. If we are to understand this stanza we must keep in mind that God in His one and simple essence is all the power and majesty of His attributes. He is omnipotent, wise, good, merciful, strong, loving; He is all the other attributes and perfections of which we have no knowledge here below. He is all this. When the soul is in union with Him, and He is pleased to admit it to a special knowledge of Himself, the soul sees in Him all these perfections and that majesty together, in the one and simple essence, clearly and distinctly, so far as it is consistent with the faith. As each one of these attributes is the very being of God, Who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—as each attribute is God Himself—and as God is infinite light and infinite divine fire, it follows that each attribute gives light and burns as God Himself. God, therefore, according to this knowledge of Him in unity, is to the soul as many lamps, because it has the knowledge of each of them, and because they minister to it the warmth of love, each in its own way, and get all of one substance,

all one lamp. This lamp is all lamps because it gives light and burns in all ways."

"These caverns of the soul's faculties being now in a wonderful way among the marvellous splendours of the lamps which burn within them, being lighted and burning in God, remit back to God in God, in addition to their self-surrender to Him, those very splendours which they receive from Him in loving bliss. They also, turning to God in God, being themselves lamps burning in the brightness of the divine lamps, return to the Beloved that very light and warmth which they receive from Him. Now, indeed, they give back unto Him, in the way in which they receive them, those very splendours which He communicates, as crystal reflects the rays of the sun; but in a nobler manner, because of the intervention of the will."

"We are not to suppose that the light of these splendours is like that of material fire, when it breaks into flames, and heats objects external to it; but rather when it heats what is within it. For the soul is now within these splendours—'in the splendours.' That is to say, it is within them, not near them, in the flames of the lamps, itself transformed in flame. The soul may therefore be said to resemble the air which is burning within the flame, and transformed in fire, for the flame is nothing else but air inflamed. The flickerings of the flame are not those of air only, or of fire only, but of air and fire together; and the fire causes the air within it to burn. It is thus that the soul with its powers is illumined in the splendours of God. The movements of the flame, that is, its vibrations and its flickerings are not the work of the soul only, transformed in the fire of the Holy Ghost, nor

of the Holy Ghost only, but of both the soul and the Holy Ghost Who moves the soul as the fire moves the air that is burning."

"There are three principal perfections of beauty in the praise of God which the soul offers to Him in union. The first is that the soul offers it as an act of duty, because it recognises this as the end of its creation; as it is written 'This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise.' (Is. xliii., 21). The second is, that it praises Him for blessings received, and because of the joy it has in praising our Lord Who is so great. The third is, that it praises Him for what He is in Himself, for if the praises of God were unaccompanied by any pleasure at all, it would still praise Him because He is Who He is.

STANZA IV.

How gently aud how lovingly
Thou liest awake in my bosom,
Where Thou secretly dwellest alone;
And in Thy sweet breathing,
How tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.

This stanza may be paraphrased as follows: "O how gently and how lovingly dost Thou lie awake in the depth and centre of my soul, where Thou in secret and in silence alone, as its sole Lord abidest, not only as in Thine own house, or in Thine own chamber, but also as within my own bosom, in close and intimate union. O how gently and how lovingly! Sweet to me is Thy breathing in that awakening, for it is full of grace and glory. O with what tenderness dost Thou inspire me with love of Thee."

"We must keep in mind that God dwells in a secret and hidden way in all souls, in their very substance,

for if He did not, they could not exist at all. This dwelling of God is very different in different souls; in some He dwells alone, in others not; in some He dwells contented, in others displeased; in some as in His own house, giving His orders and ruling it; in others as a stranger in a house not His own, where He is not permitted to command, or to do anything at all. Where personal desires and self-will least abound, there He is most alone and most contented, there He dwells as in His own house, ruling and directing it, and the more secretly He dwells, the more He is alone.

So then in that soul wherein no desire dwells, and out of which all images and forms of created things have been cast, the Beloved dwells most secretly Himself, and the purer the soul, and the greater the estrangement from everything but God, the more intimate His converse and the closer His embrace. He dwells there then in secret, for Satan cannot come near His dwelling-place, nor see the embracing; nor can any understanding explain it. But He is not hidden from the soul in the state of perfection, for such a soul is ever conscious of His presence. Only, in these awakenings, He Who before was asleep in the soul's bosom, seems to awake; for though it felt and enjoyed His presence, He seemed as one sleeping within."

"O how blessed is that soul which is ever conscious of God reposing and resting within it! How necessary it is for such a soul to flee from the matters of this world, to live in great tranquility, so that nothing whatever shall disturb the Beloved 'at His repose.' (Cant. i., 11). He is there as it were asleep in the embraces of the soul; and the soul is, in general, conscious of

His presence, and, in general, delights exceedingly in it. If He were always awake in the soul, the communications of knowledge and love would be unceasing, and that would be a state of glory. If He awakes but once, merely opening His eyes, yet affects the soul so profoundly, what would become of it, if He were continually awake within it?"

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